EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE: INSURANCE AND MEDICAID FUNDING FOR ABA

Autism insurance legislation went into effect in October, 2012, requiring insurances that are regulated by the state of Michigan to provide an autism benefit to start covering diagnostic and treatment services for those with ASD through the age of 18 years. In order for treatment to be covered, it must be evidence based. Benefits are also limited to other eligibility requirements based on individual insurance plans. Michigan Medicaid and MIChild programs also recently were approved to provide Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for young children with ASD. This benefit provides children ages 18 months to 5 years with a diagnosis of ASD with ABA services. There are eligibility requirements that will be determined through evaluations, assessments and screenings. Once a child qualifies for the Autism Benefit, the child may also be eligible for services such as Speech Therapy, Respite care, Family Training, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Community living supports.

Some Michigan insurances and Medicaid have approved ABA a covered evidence based treatment option.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

How Do Parents Access Services and Interventions for their Child with ASD?

Recently there has been an increase in the services available for children with ASD. While this increase has signaled progress within the ASD field, it has also greatly complicated the process by which parents can easily sort through and choose the best services for their child. This leads...
us to ask, how is it that parents choose services for their child with ASD? And who is it that is recommending parents to specific types of interventions? Preliminary analysis from 244 parents across the United States indicates that parents use an average of 6 interventions at one time for their child with ASD. These services are varied and do not always include services with a strong scientific basis. More importantly, recommendations to specific ASD services come from a wide range of individuals, including family members, pediatricians, speech-language pathologists, teachers, etc. We are still recruiting primary caregivers of a child with ASD who are currently living in Michigan to participate in this research study. Primary caregiver participants will complete an online survey about the interventions their child uses and the individuals who referred them to these interventions. The results will be critical in helping researchers understand how parents access services for their child, the barriers that they face, and how we might be able to improve the current model of intervention information so that parents can more easily access quality interventions for their child.

If you are interested in participating in this study, click on the survey link:

1. https://msupsychology.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_d6TqFjYT031wr5P

For more information about recommended interventions for the treatment of ASD in Michigan:


Please contact Katherine Pickard with any questions about the study survey at pickar11@msu.edu.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Evaluation of ImPACT Online

Telehealth technology has the potential to increase access to parent training interventions. We are interested in examining the feasibility of a parent training program for young children with autism that is delivered over the internet. ImPACT Online teaches parents evidence based intervention techniques to use at home in play and routines to increase their child’s social communication skills.

All parents will receive access to a self-directed, 12-week training program that is delivered over the internet. Half of the families will also receive weekly coaching from a therapist on their use of the intervention with their child conducted over the internet. Participation is free and all required software and hardware will be provided at no cost.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR RESEARCH

If you are interested in participating in these or other studies, please contact Nikki Bonter at bonterni@msu.edu or 517-432-8031 for more details.
UPCOMING PROJECTS

Provider Training in Project Impact
An important aspect of disseminating ASD interventions is training providers to implement them with fidelity. We are planning a study to evaluate our provider training protocol. Providers will be asked to submit video of themselves working with a child with ASD before and after training. If you know a provider who would be interested in getting trained in Project ImPACT as part of this study, please have

Social Skills Group Instruction
Social skills groups can improve social interactions and build friendships. We will evaluate different methods of group instructional procedures for school-aged children with high-functioning ASD. We will be recruiting children ages 8-12 with high-functioning ASD for a group that will begin in February 2014. We will be conducting screening interviews in January to make sure that the group is appropriate for the individual skills and needs of each child. To set up a screening interview or for more information about the social skills group, please contact the Psych Clinic at 517-355-9564.

FAMILY TIDBITS
Updates from our families

Noah, 6 years-old
"Noah is potty training!"
Yeah Noah! Great Job!

Liam, 4 ½ years old
"When working with Liam we’ve found it very helpful in making sure that he’s comprehending what it is that we’re asking him to do. We use fill in the blank phrases for things that we ask him to do or behaviors that we require of him frequently. We will start the phrase and it’s up to him to fill in the rest of it correctly. For example when we get up in the morning Alyssa (little sister) is usually still sleeping so we want him to be quiet when we go down stairs. I will say to him "Okay, Alyssa is still sleeping so we need to be...." and he responds "quiet". As he’s gotten better with knowing what we’re expecting from him throughout the day I will say less and less of the phrases and let him fill in more and more of them. We’ve seen him expand his understanding and comprehension, as well as to keeping up more of the expected behaviors throughout the day."
Good Job Liam! So proud of you!

Noah, 7 years-old
“Noah came downstairs wearing his cowboy Halloween costume, and he said to his dad, "Howdy, partner!"”
Later when looking for his favorite pajamas, I explained to him they were in the dirty clothes. He looked at me and said, "washing machine. I was so happy that he told me that. For him to put that kind of complex thought together...for Dominic was a small victory!!"

Good Job Dominic!

Emily, 8 years-old
"Emily just passed her swim test at the YMCA to be able to swim in the big pool and go down their water slide. She is so very proud and excited!"

Yeah Emily! Great Job!

Joshua, 4 ½ years old
"Joshua is potty trained and is riding his bicycle (with training wheels)!!! I never thought these 2 things would be possible, but he did it! I use a ton of the ImPACT techniques during our bike rides. He is also playing more cooperatively and enjoys social games such as chase and race with Jakey (Joshua’s little brother). He is even asking Jakey to play with him."

Great Job Joshua!

Thank you to all of the families who contributed stories for the Newsletter. We love reading them!

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 4, 2013, 5:30-7:00PM: Family Gathering at Jumpin’ Jax Bounce Arena!

Bring a dish to share if you choose. Look for an e-mail with more details soon!

MAY 2014: Project ImPACT Introductory Workshop.

For professionals interested in learning the intervention and providing parent training. Please stay tuned for more details regarding dates/times.