

# INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION WITH CHILDREN ON THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM IN MONTREAL : MOTHERS' PERCEPTION

Abouzeid, N. & Poirier, N.

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## Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting nearly 1 % of the population. The symptoms of ASD can range from mild to severe in several areas of development in regards to social communication as well as behaviours. (APA, 2013). To overcome these difficulties, various intervention programs were developed. For instance, in Quebec, rehabilitation centers offer Intensive Behavioural Interventions (IBI) to young children diagnosed with ASD aged between two and five years old (MSSS, 2003). Studies have shown that IBI is the most effective intervention for ASD as it helps individuals develop their cognitive, social and language skills. There are still very few studies that assess the effectiveness of IBI programs in community settings, such as the one offered in Quebec. While studies are undertaken to better understand impacts of this intervention, parent's perception of IBI remains a fair way to assess its social validity. Of the few studies that have addressed parental perception of the intervention, most reflect positive considerations of IBI (Blacklock, Weiss, Perry, & Freeman, 2012).

## Objectives

The aims of this study are to :

1. Describe mothers' perception of the IBI characteristics and the context in which it was provided to their child.
2. Describe mothers' perception of the intervention in regards to the impact of IBI on their child's development and its family.

## Method

Participants :

- 15 mothers of children presenting ASD
- Mothers living in the Greater Montreal area
- Children aged between 5 and 8 years old
- Children all received at least 8 months of IBI

Instruments :

- Semi-structured interviews (90 to 120 minutes) and short questionnaires

Analysis :

- Qualitative thematic analysis using NVivo (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2008)
- Inter-rater reliability (K > 0.90)

## Services provided

Waiting period :

- Between 6 and 18 months
- 3 families resorted to private services while on the waiting list for public services
- Support received during their waiting period was appreciated (n=7)

Precocity :

- Half of children received IBI as of the age of 4 years old (18 to 58 mths) (n=7)
- Children with a medical condition had earlier access to IBI (n=2)

Intensity :

- Most children received more than 20 hours per week (8 to 42 mths)(n=12)

Duration :

- Some children received more than 2 years of IBI (n=7)
- Services stopped before children turned 6 years old (n=10)

Terms of intervention :

- Individual (n=9) and group (n=2) intervention or both (n=4)
- Supervision varying from bi-monthly to once a year
- Few children received complementary speech or occupational therapy (n=3)
- Intervention team members included a supervisor and an educator (n=12)

## Discussion

Mothers of this study have a positive perception of IBI. However, it appears there are weaknesses in regards to IBI's implementation, especially when compared to results of previous studies revealing requirement for a successful intervention. Further research is imperative to achieve better standards in terms of intervening with children with ASD and to ensure the efficacy of the treatment.

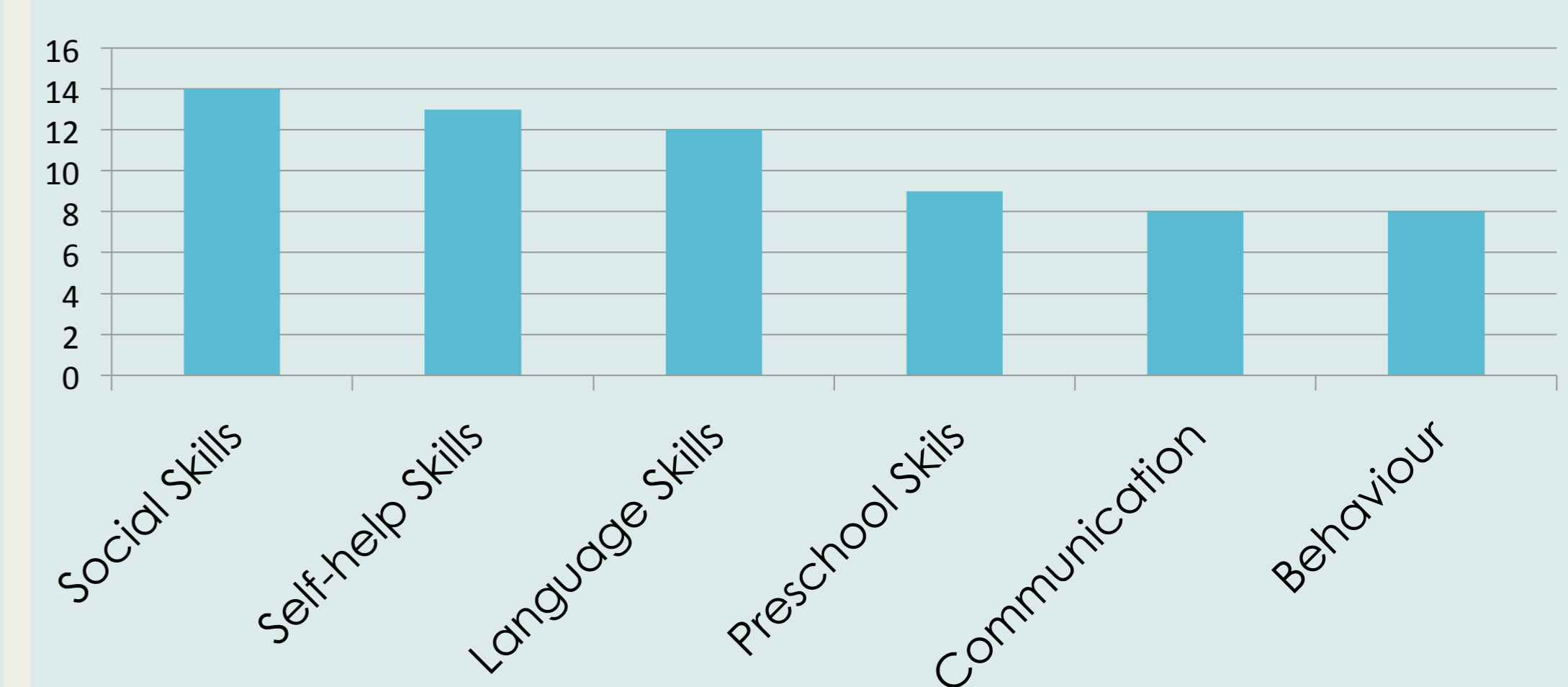
## References

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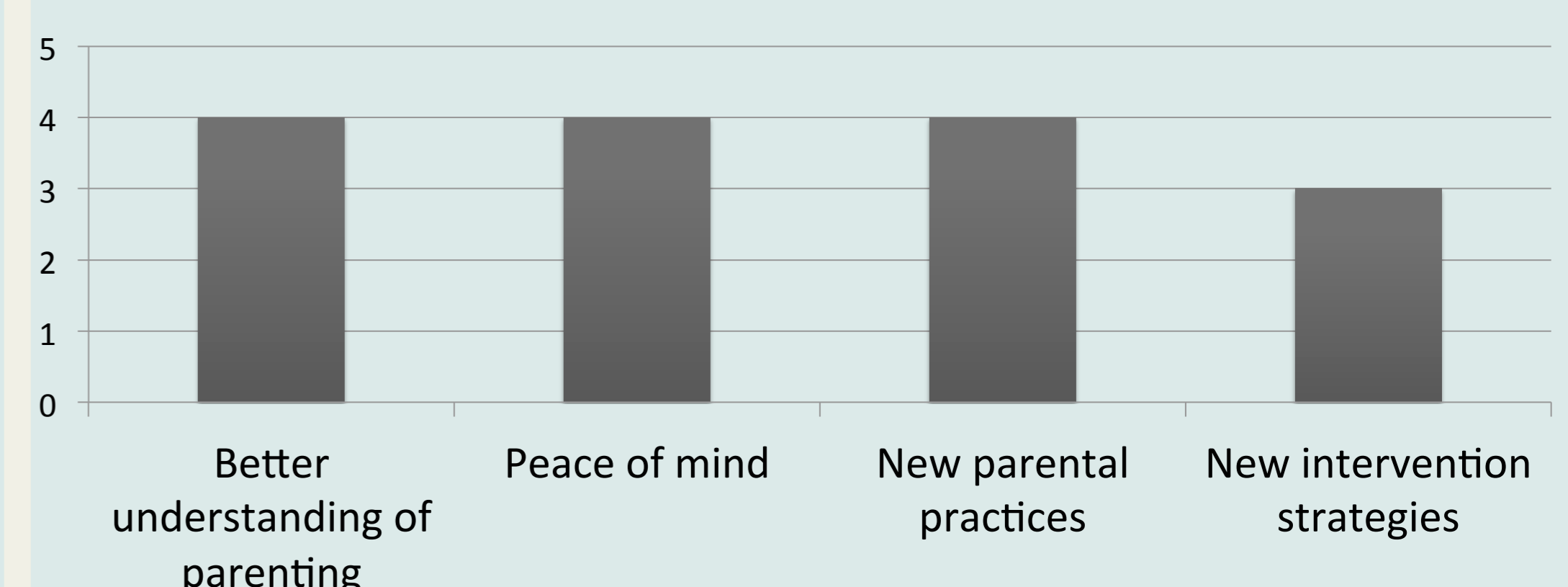
## Results

### Perception of IBI

Improvements observed



Mothers' perceived winnings



Overall perception of IBI

