



Introduction

- Prevalence of autism in children in NZ has increased to 2% (Ministry of Health, 2019)
- Provision of early intervention enhances the quality of life of children with autism
- Limited research in NZ about availability and desire for services



Research questions

As reported by a sample of parents with young children with autism in New Zealand,

- What **type and amount** of educational early interventions do their **children receive**?
- What **type and amount** of educational early interventions do parents **want their children to receive**?

Participants

- Parent/caregiver of a child with autism who lives in NZ
- Their children must
 - have a formal diagnosis of autism by a qualified health professional
 - be under the age of 6
 - not yet be attending school

*An **educational early intervention** was any educational programme aimed at teaching academic skills, daily life skills, self-care skills and/or social skills to children with Autism.*

Method

- Online questionnaire
 - A. Non-identifying information
 - B. Current interventions: Type and amount
 - C. Preferred interventions: Type and amount
- Distributed through autism specific organisations
- Data collection period: 3 months
- 64 usable responses



Number of educational early interventions

As reported by parents,

Current	Preferred
Children were receiving 2 types of interventions	Parents would like their children to receive an additional 5 types of interventions

Type of educational early interventions

Current	Preferred
Speech language therapy was the most common (51.6%) followed by intervention through a teacher/ESW	Behaviour support (53.1%) was the most common followed by music therapy (48.4%)
Some participants indicated that their child is currently not receiving any type of intervention at all (18.8%)	

Amount of educational early interventions

Current	Preferred
Children were receiving 8.5 hours of intervention/ month	Prefer an additional 37 hours of intervention/ month
Amount of intervention delivered through professionals with disability specific training is about 6 hours/month	Prefer an additional 19 hours/month through professionals with disability training

Factors associated with service utilisation

- Children's expressive language ability was significantly associated with parent preferred services

When parents reported their **child had less spoken language**, they also reported the **desire to have more types of interventions and increased amount of interventions**

Implications for practice

- Children with autism in NZ are receiving less types of interventions and lesser amount of intervention in comparison to research* from other countries
- There is great parental demand for different types of services and increased amount of services
- Particularly, there seem to be a demand for behaviour support and music therapy which are currently unmet

*References:
Goin-Kochel, Myers, & Mackintosh, 2007; Green et al., 2006; Hume, Bellini, & Pratt, 2005; Lee McIntyre, & Zemanic, 2017; Patten, Baranek, Watson, & Schultz, 2012; Raz, R., Lerner-Geva, Leon, Chodick, & Gabis, 2013; Thomas, Morrissey, & McLaurin, 2007

Limitations

- Small sample size
- Parental self-report
- Some participants did not specify the amount of intervention

References

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