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Telehealth for Expanding the Reach of Early Autism Training to Parents

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Although there is consensus that parents should be involved in interventions designed for young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), parent participation alone does not ensure consistent, generalized gains in children's development. Barriers such as costly intervention, time-intensive sessions, and family life may prevent parents from using the intervention at home. Telehealth integrates communication technologies to provide health-related services at a distance. A 12 one-hour per week parent intervention program was tested using telehealth delivery with nine families with ASD. The goal was to examine its feasibility and acceptance for promoting child learning throughout families' daily play and caretaking interactions at home. Parents became skilled at using teachable moments to promote children's spontaneous language and imitation skills and were pleased with the support and ease of telehealth learning. Preliminary results suggest the potential of technology for helping parents understand and use early intervention practices more often in their daily interactions with children