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Evidence for the Implementation of the Early Start Denver Model for Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Background: The Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) is a manualized comprehensive therapy for toddlers with autism spectrum disorder. It emphasizes interpersonal engagement through synchrony, rhythms, and reciprocity to decrease symptom severity and accelerate cognitive, social-emotional, and language development. **Objective:** To systematically review evidence regarding the use of the ESDM as an intervention for young children with autism spectrum disorder. **Design:** PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Embase, and CINAHL were searched from 2010- 2015 using predetermined inclusion criteria. Study methodology, participant characteristics, and outcomes were evaluated and quality of evidence was assigned. **Results:** Eight articles met inclusion criteria and consisted of two randomized controlled trials, four controlled trials, and two observational cohort studies. Evidence quality ranged from low to high. **Conclusions:** The ESDM is an effective intervention that improves cognition, language, and adaptive behavior. ESDM strategies delivered in community group settings and in the home by parents have potential to be efficacious and feasible. **Keywords:** Early Start Denver Model, autism