

Are School-Based Interventions the “Best Hope” for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

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A prominent developmental psychologist in the field once stated that interventions in the schools may be the “best hope” for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Schools, however, are complex social organizations, and moving evidence-based intervention into use by practitioners in school settings is a tall order. In this keynote paper, Dr. Odom will describe a process for identifying evidence-based intervention, four projects that promote teachers’ use of evidence-based practices in preschool, elementary, and high school settings, and outcomes resulting for their use in the United State. The first project, the National Professional Development Center on ASD conducted a systematic review that identified 27 evidence-based focused intervention practices and used those practices in its work in establishing professional development programs in 12 states in the US. The second project, The Efficacy Study of Elementary Learners with ASD (TESELA) is conducting a randomized trial examining implementation and outcomes in elementary school settings. The third project, the Center on Secondary Education for Students with ASD (CSESA) has examined the use of EBPs in 60 high schools in the US. The last project, which is just beginning, is designing a model to promote paraprofessionals use of foundational ABA intervention practices. School factors that affect implementation and adoption will also be discussed.