

Latest results for once-promising behavioral therapy for autism called ‘extremely disappointing’

A much-touted behavioral therapy for autism, the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM), may not be as effective as its creators had [hoped](#).

In the latest study of the therapy, it did not improve children’s intelligence quotients (IQ) or adaptive behavior any more than other treatments. Children treated with ESDM showed some improvement in their language, but only at two of the three study sites.

Independent experts say the results are disappointing, and they question some of the methods used to generate them.

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In ESDM, parents or caregivers use the child’s interests to practice several skills at the same time. For example, they might harness a child’s interest in playing with blocks to work on her imitation, language and motor skills.

Several therapies require less intensive effort yet produce better results, Green says.

For example, the [Preschool Autism Communication Trial](#) (PACT) — which Green is involved with — and [JASPER](#) each require only a fraction of the time needed for ESDM. PACT has been shown to deliver sustained improvements in autism traits and JASPER benefits language skills.

“Given the overall context of autism intervention science at the moment, [the new results] are extremely disappointing,” [professor Jonathan] Green says.

Read full, original post: [Latest test of promising autism therapy shows only mild benefits](#)