

DMNS FAIR

Queens College, City University of New York
Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
Faculty Achievement In Research

MY NAME: Emily A. Jones

MY DEPARTMENT: Psychology

MY RESEARCH (IN SIMPLE WORDS THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD BY ANYONE ON THE Q64 BUS):

Behavior analytic interventions have made a significant impact on the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, improving cognition, communication, and social development, and reducing problem behavior. In the area of autism there has been considerable research and many children readily access behavior analytic interventions. As researchers have identified the earliest characteristics or core deficits of autism, interventions can be developed that are tailored to address those early deficits. Intervention tailored to address those specific impairments may significantly improve outcomes, minimize secondary impairments, and return development on a more typical path. In my lab we are developing and examining intervention for children with autism that specifically address early core deficits in the area of social-communication including joint attention and spontaneous language. Current projects include the examination of the choice of materials with which to address early deficits in joint attention in children with autism and teaching the coordination of eye gaze and smiling during joint attention interventions. We are also exploring ways to more efficiently address joint attention deficits by breaking up early social-communication skills into smaller steps.

Other developmental disabilities, for example Down syndrome, also present with characteristic areas of deficit as well as relative strengths (a behavioral phenotype). Despite the extensive intervention research in the field of autism, there is considerably less research into the development and examination of interventions to address the deficits that are now being demonstrated for other disorders. Unfortunately, outcomes remain poor. In my lab we are also developing and examining behavior analytic interventions to address characteristic deficits to children with Down syndrome. Current projects with young children with Down syndrome include examination of interventions to address early communication impairments and object exploration.

In much of our research we train parents and other caregivers to implement interventions in children's homes, communities, schools. Other family members, especially siblings, also play a significant role in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. I am involved in the development and evaluation of a program providing support and training to siblings of children with developmental disabilities. This is a unique program in which undergraduate and graduate students across disciplines volunteer, receive training, and then work with the children. We are evaluating the effects of this program on the children with developmental disabilities, their siblings, their interaction and relationship, and the student volunteers.

MY RESEARCH IN 140 CHARACTERS (OPTIONAL, MAY BE LEFT BLANK):