

### INTRODUCTION

- Futures Behavior Therapy Center provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other related developmental disorders. The center offers structured therapy environments that help improve a child's social, academic and self-help skills.
- Services provided at futures are:
  - Speech Therapy
  - Occupational Therapy
  - ABA Therapy
  - Focused ABA Afternoon Program



### INTERNSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- To determine preferred communication methods utilized by children with autism spectrum disorder after applying a total communication approach to language therapy.

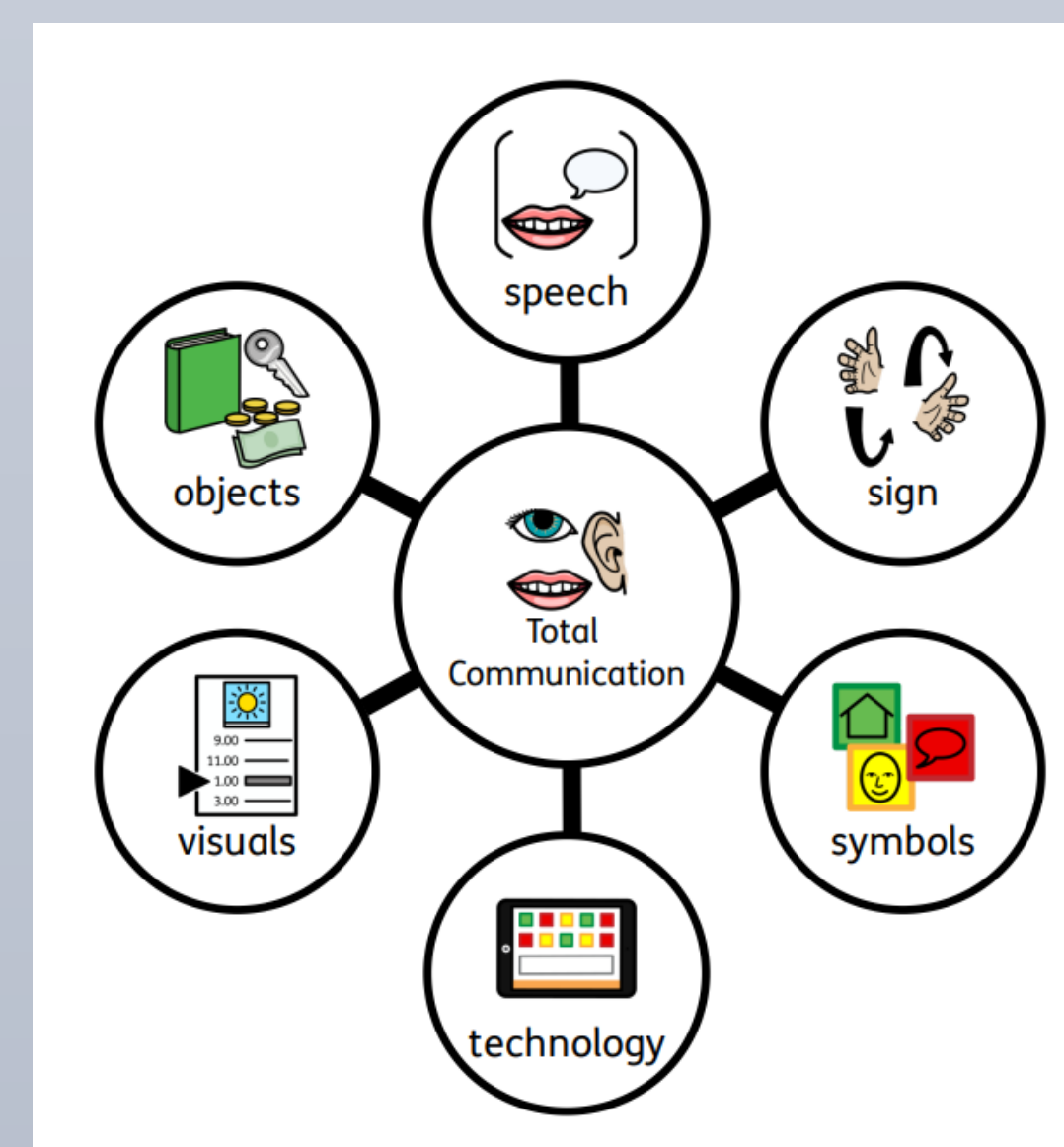
### RELATED LITERATURE

Cui & Ni (2023) highlight different intervention approaches used to support language and communication development in children with autism spectrum disorder. They talk about some common approaches, including behavioral therapies, speech language therapy methods, developmental behavioral interventions, and technology-based supports. The article suggests that the earlier these interventions are introduced the more effective they'll be, especially when they address both communication and social skills.

This article by Canpolat-Cig & Hanline (2025) reviews different communication technologies used to help children with Autism, especially those who are minimally or nonverbal. It highlights tools like AAC devices, which not only support communication but also improve social interaction and learning. The article also explains that many of these technologies can track progress and adapt to each child's needs, helping therapists and caregivers better understand what strategies are most effective.

### MATERIALS & METHODS

- Increased communication attempts and engagement in children with autism spectrum disorder, including verbal speech, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, sign language, or gestures.
- Observed the speech-language pathologist (SLP) using different communication approaches, including articulation strategies (activities to support accurate sound production) and honoring/encouraging any of the methods of communication (speech, sign, AAC, etc).
- Collected data by note taking the clients correct, incorrect, and non-responsive attempts when imitating target words or responding to prompts provided by the clinician.
- Observed which communication method was more effective or engaging for the specific individual and which one needed more prompting
- Assisted the SLP during sessions by engaging in activities to keep clients motivated and by responding to prompts to help redirect them when they began to lose focus.
- Observed 3 individuals receiving speech therapy over a 3-month period
- A chart was created to compare each client's communication level when they first start speech therapy, their current preferred communication method, and their emerging communication skills, which refer to new communication forms being developed during therapy. For example, Client A is beginning to use vocalizations, Client B is beginning to use AAC, and Client C is beginning to use more verbal speech



### RESULTS

Clients	Level of Communication at Intake	Current preferred Communication Method	Emerging
A	Hand pulling, crying, single AAC icon for "chase"	AAC	Vocal
B	Isolated pointing, crying	Gesture	AAC
C	Rote phrases, hand guiding, crying	Vocal/AAC	Vocal

### CONCLUSIONS

All three clients showed progress in reducing maladaptive behaviors while improving functional communication through individualized communication methods. These results suggest that honoring any method of communication is an effective way to increase expressive communication and reduce frustration. It also shows that there isn't only one way or form to communicate, it can come in different ways depending on the specific individual.

### REFERENCES

- Cui, M., Ni, Q.(2023) Review of intervention methods for language and communication disorders in children with autism spectrum disorders. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.15735>
- Canpolat-Cig, N., & Hanline, M.F. (2025). Effects of an iPad-based augmentative and alternative communication intervention on wh-question answering skills of an adolescent with autism spectrum disorders. <https://doi.org/10.71410/ESApub.ITEJ.2025.1>

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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