Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if a summer camp utilizing academic and behavioral remediation programming could increase the academic achievement of children with autism spectrum disorders. Academic achievement was measured using the Wide Range Achievement Test-Fourth Edition (WRAT4; Wilkinson & Robertson, 2006) and an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI; Burns & Roe, 2002) in a sample of 21 children ranging from 6 years, 0 months to 13 years, 1 month prior to and after attending a summer camp for children with autism around a Midwestern city. Repeated measures MANOVAs were used to analyze WRAT4 and IRI assessment results. MANOVA results indicated there were no significant changes on any of the tests of the WRAT4 over time after a Bonferroni correction. MANOVA results further indicated there was no interaction between gender and time. A nonparametric sign test also was conducted to examine changes in the WRAT4 tests. Results of the nonparametric sign test did not reveal significant changes in the WRAT4 tests; however, the Sentence Comprehension test did approach significance. Although participants did not make statistical gains on the WRAT4, they also did not demonstrate a decline in academic skills as measured by the WRAT4. Participants demonstrated less consistent results on the word lists of the IRI as well as the passage comprehension component of the IRI. The number of children who declined or improved on the IRI overtime appeared to be random. A qualitative analysis of four participants selected based on age and gender did not reveal any hypotheses for the differences in performance on the IRI over time. Suggestions for future research include replicating the study with a larger sample, children with multicultural backgrounds, and controlling for the cognitive abilities of the participants.