**Choosing Pivotal Response Treatment or the Picture Exchange Communication System for Improving Communication in Children with Autism: Review of the Relevant Child Characteristics**

With the goal of providing individualized intervention to children on the Autism Spectrum, clinicians are in need of guidance for choosing between evidence-based language and

communication protocols based on their client’s characteristics. Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT), a play-based intervention, and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), a protocol that utilizes picture cards, both target communication. The goal of this paper is to summarize the available knowledge regarding how the decision to implement PECS or PRT can be informed by child characteristics. While little research has prospectively predicted outcomes in response to these interventions based on pre-treatment characteristics, this study synthesizes decades’ worth of studies on the factors that contribute to response or non-response to treatment. Child characteristics identified to predict success with PRT (e.g., toys interest, low avoidance, positive affect) and PECS (e.g., object interest, poor motor imitation, discrimination skills) are reviewed. Factors that appear to predict language gains in both interventions (e.g., chronological/developmental age, cognitive ability, joint attention, use of words [e.g., echolalia]) are also discussed. The profiles associated with suitability for PRT and PECS are described in detail, intending to provide a practical resource for clinicians and families who are making a treatment decision for children with Autism.

Keywords: Autism, Pivotal Response Treatment, Picture Exchange Communication System, Characteristics, Response, Individualized Intervention