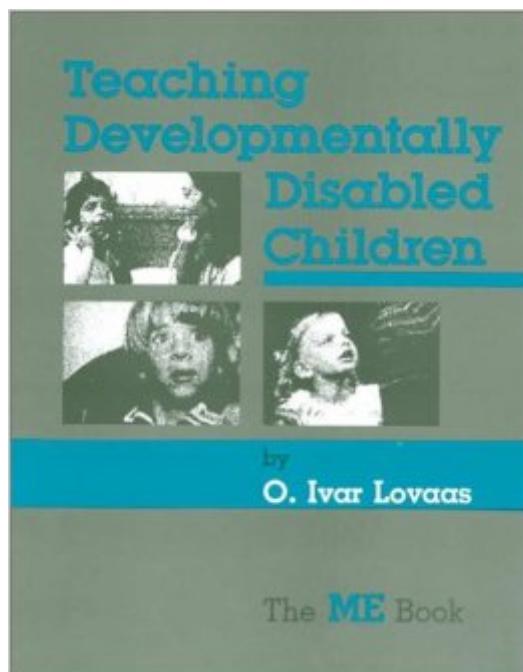


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Teaching Developmentally Disabled Children: The Me Book



Synopsis

...designed for use with children from age 3 & above who suffer from mental retardation, brain damage, autism, severe aphasia, emotional disorders or childhood schizophrenia...

Book Information

Paperback: 250 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ [See all reviewsÂ](#) (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #193,407 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 inÂ Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Children's Health > Special Needs Children #29 inÂ Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Special Education > Mentally Disabled #153 inÂ Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Special Education > Learning Disabled

Customer Reviews

Read this book. We have implemented an intensive at-home ABA program with our autistic son which started when he was 31 months old. In 3 months, he has progressed from avoiding eye contact and interaction, and not using his hands at all for anything except eating/drinking, and being easily distressed to: smiling and interacting with family members and friendly outsiders in a variety of environments, normal play at the neighborhood park, and normal play with many toddler and preschool toys, including 12-piece peg puzzles. He was almost totally mute at the start of the program and now happily vocalizes while playing and interacting. Like many parents facing autism we were skeptical of Lovaas' methods. What we are coming to realize, however, is that many critics of the method (including ourselves, previously) have NEVER seen it done! Punishment is not the goal--positive reinforcement is. A good ABA therapist will want your child to: 1) be successful and, more importantly, 2) to enjoy his/her success. To use the words of a previous parent reviewer, you lovingly insist on your child attending to you (as you would with any strong-willed toddler or child if you were, say, changing their diaper against their "better" wishes!) and over time you then present a series of teachable moments where your child is first taught the simplest of actions or tasks, the primary purpose of which is to be able to then positively reinforce your child for a "job well done,"

with a hug, a tickle, a toss in the air, accompanied by tons of verbal praise and maybe a tiny bit of candy.

Of all the many, many books I have read on autism since my 3 year old was diagnosed last month, I found this to be one of the most straight-forward, easy to read books with clear, easy-to-follow instructions. Although many other authors claim to have improved on his method, Lovaas has the proof to back his claims and no other methodology has come close. I agree that it is dated (chapter 2 deals with physical punishments), but it is very well-written, easy to read and follow, and well-explained. I give it 5 stars because I was able to employ it immediately and get positive results the very first day with my son. Even the use of aversives (I use a loud "no!" or simply ignore/withhold rewards) clearly aid in behavior modification. At the end of the first month of using his methods, my previously NONVERBAL, poorly attentive, self-injurious son is noticeably more affectionate (my friends and sisters have actually been shocked at his progress), comes when called, makes eye contact, can point to items he desires from his toy shelf (he previously only hand-guided but could not point), has significantly reduced tantrums and self-injurious behavior, and has a VOCABULARY OF 30 WORDS! I started the first day just with teaching him to sit down. It took me 2 hours to get him to sit down on command, and even then I had to prompt him constantly and reward him each time, as advised in the book. By the second day, he was sitting without being prompted, in clear anticipation of his treat, and I was able to begin teaching him to look at me. After mastering these 2 first basic skills, we had the foundation set to teach him, since we could now obtain his attention.

As far as one can tell from this book, Lovaas has not significantly updated his techniques since the '60s and '70s, except to eliminate extreme aversives such as electric shock, and his theory is straight '50s Skinner (stimulus and response, reward and punishment, and don't worry about comprehension)."The Me Book" still advocates a lot of shouting and slapping, and a very "macho" approach, including forcibly suppressing "unacceptable" but harmless behaviour like hand-flapping, evidently on the basis that children can be "made" to be normal if only you are forceful enough. Despite the current wave of Lovaas-mania, based on his claims to have "cured" autistic children (claims which has been disputed by other experts, and which sit oddly with his own earlier results showing that years of work failed to produce anything resembling "normality"), he is far from being state-of-the-art in the behavioural field itself. Researchers such as Robert and Lynn Koegel (who originally worked with Lovaas but started out on their own at least in part because of the

unhappiness they observed in children on Lovaas's program) have documented that approaches such the "natural language paradigm" which utilize the child's interests and emphasise shared control and functional communication, are markedly more effective than Lovaas-style "drill". In a Lovaas-type session, a child might be drilled to reply "ball" in response to the question "what's this?", and be given a sweet or a cookie as a reward.

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