

An intervention from Educational Psychology
for abused children: Language stimulation.

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Abstract

Introduction. In this paper we propose a program of intervention aimed at stimulating oral language. The program is designed for application with children who have been the object of child abuse, currently institutionalized in shelters for minor children. Various prior studies have highlighted the difficulties of the abused child in the verbal arena and in different developmental areas.

Method. The sample from which the intervention program is based is composed of twenty children from a child abuse situation, between the ages of 5 and 9 years. Evaluation of the children's linguistic development was performed using the *Batería de Lenguaje Objetiva y Criterial*, BLOC [Objective and Criterial Language Battery] (Puyuelo, Wiig, Renom & Solanas, 1998).

Results. Results indicate low self-esteem and poor skills in communication and social relationships. The children show difficulty in adapting language to the context and they use a very limited vocabulary which hinders comprehension of content. It is evident that there is a significant delay in the different aspects of language which were evaluated. Especially noticeable were the marked difficulties in pragmatics.

Discussion. This research underscores the need for putting intervention programs into place which will make a difference in the personal, linguistic and social competency of minors who have been the object of child abuse situations. It is fundamental for these children to develop skills or competencies which favor socially adaptive functioning, basic skills for social interaction which encourage the pragmatic function of language, skills for relating with adults and for solving interpersonal problems.

Key words: child abuse, language, intervention, research.