Abstract - Applied Behavior Analysis in Populations with Autism: A Look at Social Interactions

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) have been identified as being the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. This growth in the prevalence of individuals with ASD has suggested a larger need for funding for evidence-based practices. More recently, such practices have been shown to be statistically effective, and therefore, have become more prevalent in the treatment of ASD. Evidence-based practices have been proven to be effective in the modification of social interaction of individuals with ASD, while also prompting the generalization of other skilled-based behaviors. Although some studies have lacked necessary features to make it an evidence-based practice, results have shown significant improvements in social functioning, and further improvements on these studies are important for the growth of such practices in the field. Improving such deficits in social skills is pertinent in developing a life in which individuals with ASD may interact in normative social manners, and become integrated in a society that is communicatively-based. Developing and implementing evidence-based practices in order to improve social skills in individuals with ASD is a field that is undeniably growing, as the number of children being diagnosed has taken a dramatic increase in the past decade. This paper will consider different evidence-based practices including: the TEACHH program, reinforcement-based interventions, interventions based on physical and computer-aided systems, antecedent-based interventions, the use of social stories, and how these evidence-based practices can help to improve social functioning skill deficits in individuals with ASD. Such practices must be focused on and continually improved in order to establish a field
of evidence-based practices in the area of ASD where they had previously been considered obsolete.