Introduction

Background
High-quality collaboration has been associated with improvements in parental satisfaction, student outcomes, and family-school partnerships, particularly for students with autism, a population often at an increased need for consistent, coordinated care and frequent progress evaluation (e.g., Christenson & Carlson, 2005; Whitaker, 2007). However, there is a lack of cost-effective and efficient tools to facilitate communication and progress-monitoring in order to inform decision-making among home, school, and outside services providers.

Direct Behavior Rating (DBR) is a form of behavioral assessment that involves making a brief rating of student behavior following a target activity (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Christ, 2009). DBR has the potential for being a flexible and efficient progress monitoring method (Chafouleas et al., 2009). This study uses DBR to collect data through a home-school log. The log is used to facilitate cross-systems communication and data-based decision making among parents and educators to improve outcomes for students with autism.

Objective
The purpose of this study is to provide schools with a home-school log utilizing DBR instrumentation and procedures to facilitate cross-systems communication and data-based decision-making for individuals working with elementary students with autism. Student outcome data is monitored in order to evaluate whether use of the log, which is intended to improve the consistency of communication and consequences across settings, also helps to improve student behavior.

Method

Participants: Four student participants with Autism or PDD-NOS in an elementary school setting are the targets of the intervention. The parents and educators involved in each student’s education share information through the home-school log.

Pre-Baseline: Researcher meets with student’s team of parents and educators to discuss target behaviors, target activities, and provide procedural training.

Baseline: Each day they are working with the student, educators will rate the percentage of time the student displayed each pre-specified target behavior during various pre-specified activities using a Baseline DBR Form.

Intervention: Educators continue to rate student’s behaviors, but do so on the Daily Ratings pages in the Home-School Log binder, providing comments if desired. Parents complete Home Activity that involves a quick activity with the child (e.g., reading, playing game) and writing any questions or comments for educators. Weekly, educators evaluate students’ ratings in graphic format.

Results

Data collection for this study is ongoing, however, thus far data from the Home-School Log intervention have indicated improvements in behavior for Students 1 and 2. Improvement in behavioral data for Students 3 and 4 is unclear so far, however it is typical for this type of intervention to show more improvement over time. Additionally, educators had not yet evaluated the Home-School Log data in graphic format at the time this poster was created. It is hypothesized that over time, the Home-School Log will:

• ease collection and communication of data across systems,
• facilitate data-based decision making,
• improve student outcomes,
• improve family-school partnership, and
• improve coordination of interdisciplinary care.

References
