



Center for Diversity in  
Public Health Leadership Training  
at Kennedy Krieger Institute

# What Evidence Based Strategies Do Parents Spontaneously Use With Their Infants?

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## INTRODUCTION

- Although clinicians have improved identifying and treating early signs of autism, there are still barriers that stop families from treatment
- Barriers to early identification:
  - Long waitlists for assessments
  - Traveling long distances
  - Lack of specialized providers
- The TEDI project has developed a telehealth assessment for infants to improve families' access to treatment options
  - Provide support and resources
- Goal: To identify behavioral strategies that could be taught in future intervention



## OBJECTIVE

1. To examine whether parents spontaneously use specific developmental support strategies at fidelity
2. To determine whether parents use certain strategies at higher fidelity than others

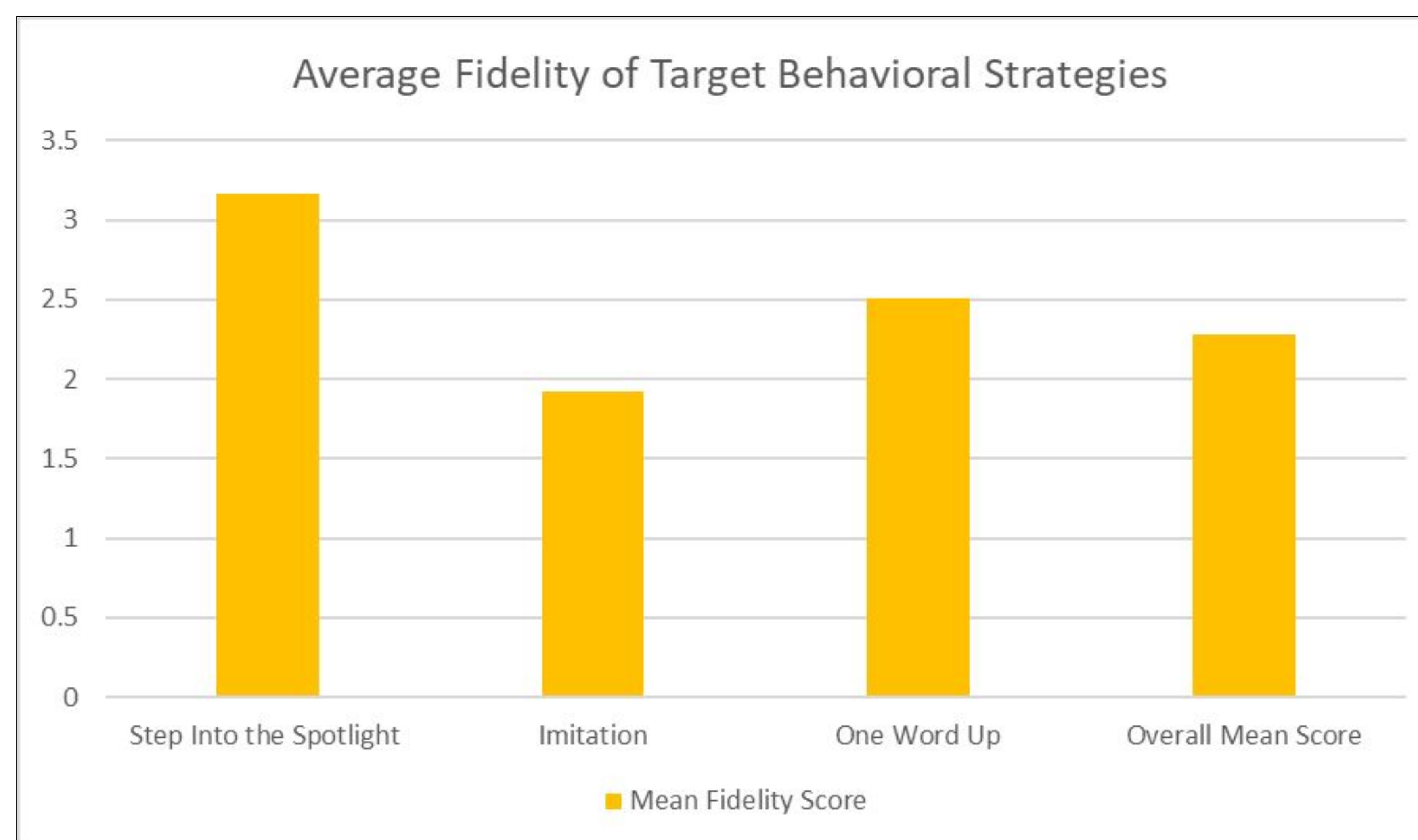
## METHODS

- Participants: 17 Parents (N=17)
  - Self-selected sample
- 1-hour session, two 3-min segments of free play
  - Parent was instructed to "play as you normally would" with their 8-12 month old child during parent-child interactions
- Scored 3 target strategies on a 1-5 Likert Scale:
  - **Step Into the Spotlight:** face-to-face, close contact
  - **Imitation:** facial expressions, vocalization, gestures
  - **One Word Up:** labeling/interpreting actions, feelings, expressions, reactions
- Conducted a Wilcoxon-signed rank-test
- Compared parent mean fidelity score to a score of 4, representing target fidelity levels
- Compared parent mean fidelity scores on each strategy using repeated measures ANOVA and post-hoc pairwise tests

## RESULTS

- The mean fidelity scores were significantly lower than the target fidelity score of 4 ( $Z = .000, p > .001$ )
- There was a statistically significant effect of behavior category on mean fidelity score,  $F(2, 30) = 14.257, p < .001$
- Post-hoc, pairwise tests found that mean fidelity scores for Imitation were significantly lower than both Step Into the Spotlight ( $p = < .001$ ) and One Word Up ( $p = .008$ ), which did not differ from each other ( $p = .10$ )

Figure 1: Mean scores for SIS, I, OWU and overall mean score (N=17)



## METHODS (cont'd)

### Demographics

	PARENT	INFANT
SEX	N/A	Male: 64.7% Female: 35.3%
RACE	Asian: 11.8% Asian, White: 5.9% White: 82.4%	Asian: 11.8% Asian, White: 23.5% White: 64.7%
ETHNICITY	Hispanic or Latino: 0 Non-Hispanic or Latino: 100%	Hispanic or Latino: 5.9% Non-Hispanic or Latino: 94.1%

## DISCUSSION

### Conclusion:

- Overall, parents did not spontaneously use these behavioral strategies at fidelity
  - There was significant variability in the use of their strategies
- Our findings suggest these behaviors may be good candidate intervention targets because they are skills that need to be taught

### Next Steps:

- Determine whether parents use of these strategies improves infant development
- Work with families to identify areas of need and develop supports for them in those areas

### Future Direction:

- Identify new strategies for parents that are more desirable and feasible

## STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

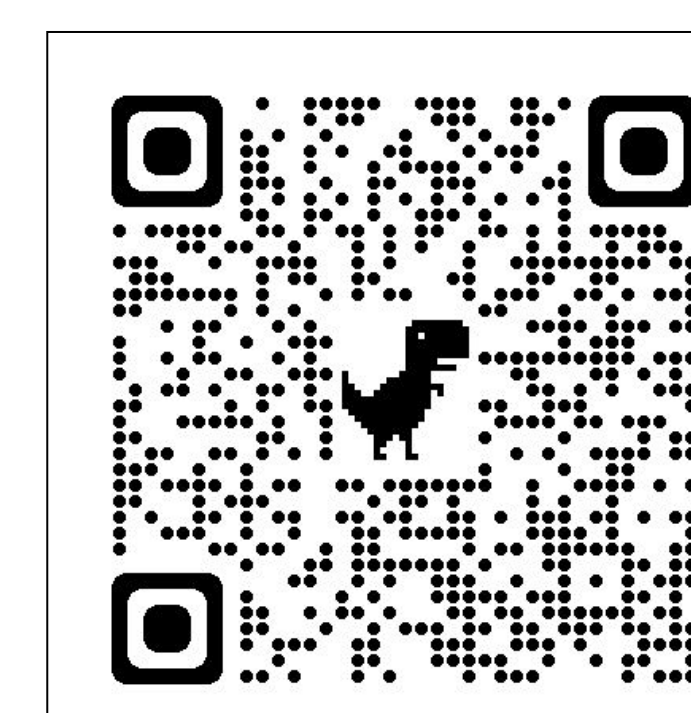
### Strengths:

- Inclusion of families with concerns about their infants development
- Convenience of telehealth

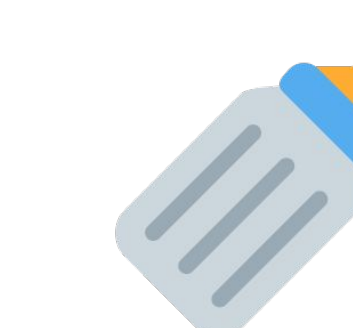
### Limitations:

- Time constraints
- Small sample size

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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