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Introduction

Parents of children with disabilities often experience significant challenges related to managing children's behaviors. The challenge might be even greater if a child's disability interacts with disruptive behaviors. Research on behavior ratings suggests that there exist discrepancies between informants (e.g., parents, teachers) probably due to the informant characteristics and the context where the behaviors are observed (Achenbach et al., 1987). A child's characteristics such as a disability status could also affect informants' ratings. Specifically, a child's disability status might affect informants' behavior ratings negatively, possibly due to perceived stereotypes or stigma related to the "label." At the same time, parents and teachers of children with multiple challenges (i.e., disability, disruptive behaviors) might benefit even more from an intervention that involves collaborative efforts of family and school. This study aimed to examine the impact of a child's disability status on a) parents' and teachers' perceptions of child behaviors at pretest and b) the effectiveness of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008) in children with disruptive behaviors.

Research Questions

- 1) How does a child's disability status affect parents' and teachers' child behavior ratings at pretest?
- 2) Do children with identified disabilities benefit more from CBC than children who do not have an identified disability?

Methods

Settings and Participants

- 207 parents and 87 teachers of 207 Kindergarten through 3rd grade children
- Participating children were identified by teachers as displaying disruptive behaviors using the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (Walker & Sevenson, 1992) and related measures.

Design

- A randomized experimental design
- CBC: 52 classroom groups of 2-3 students (112 total students); structured, indirect service delivery by behavioral consultants over 8-12 weeks
- Traditional school support: 42 classroom groups of 2-3 students (95 total students)

Measures

Dependent variables

- Behavioral Assessment System for Children-2nd Edition (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004): Externalizing problems composite, Adaptive skills composite, Hyperactivity, Aggression, Conduct problems
- Social Skills Rating Scale (Gresham & Elliott, 1990): Total social skills score

Independent variable

- Child disability status: Receiving special education services and/or having a clinical diagnosis (N = 88)

Results

Question 1. How does a child's disability status affect parents' and teachers' child behavior ratings at pretest?

Parent report

The omnibus MANOVA results revealed a statistically significant effect of disability status on dependent variables, Wilks' $\lambda = .82$, $F(6, 143) = 5.33$, $p < .01$. Results of univariate tests are presented below.

	Means and Standard Deviations		ANOVA F (1, 137)
	Absence of Disability	Presence of Disability	
BASC			
Externalizing Problems	57.31 (10.95)	63.75 (12.81)	10.22**
Hyperactivity	58.36 (11.84)	63.97 (13.36)	6.88*
Aggression	56.09 (9.55)	61.06 (10.72)	8.36**
Conduct Problems	56.64 (13.04)	61.70 (13.42)	5.07*
Adaptive Skills	46.61 (8.66)	39.91 (8.76)	20.47**
Social Skills Rating Scale			
Total social skills	101.69 (16.55)	88.59 (18.97)	18.90**

Teacher report

The omnibus MANOVA results revealed statistically significant effect of disability status on dependent variables, Wilks' $\lambda = .92$, $F(6, 151) = 2.21$, $p < .05$. Results of univariate tests are presented below.

	Means and Standard Deviations		ANOVA F (1, 148)
	Absence of Disability	Presence of Disability	
BASC			
Externalizing Problems	66.71 (11.88)	69.40 (11.07)	2.03
Hyperactivity	68.33 (10.79)	71.13 (10.10)	2.66
Aggression	64.99 (14.69)	67.96 (13.76)	1.61
Conduct Problems	63.26 (12.38)	64.18 (11.42)	.22
Adaptive Skills	42.16 (7.12)	39.68 (5.78)	5.34*
Social Skills Rating Scale			
Total social skills	84.38 (10.94)	83.24 (11.14)	.40

Note. Analyses for question 1 did not account for students' nesting within classrooms

Question 2. Do children with identified disabilities benefit more from CBC than children who do not have an identified disability?

Data analysis

- A random coefficients regression model (i.e., multilevel model) that takes into account the nesting of time points within individuals and within teachers was performed for each outcome variable.

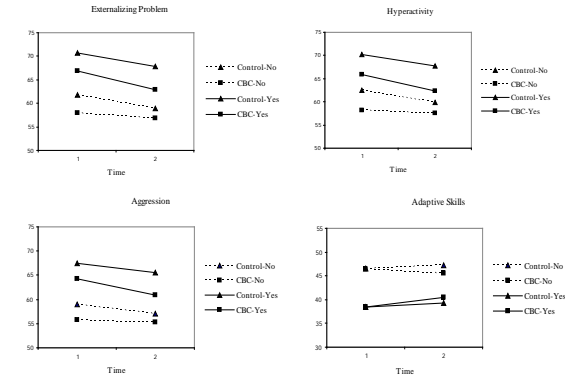
Parent report

	Estimate	SE	DF	t
Externalizing Problem				
Intercept	61.74	1.93	86	31.99
Time	-2.80	.98	226	-2.84**
Condition	-3.84	2.39	226	-1.61
Disability	8.93	1.94	226	4.60**
Time*Condition	1.70	1.47	226	1.16
Time*Condition*Disability	-2.78	1.34	226	-2.07*
Hyperactivity				
Intercept	62.44	2.25	86	27.80**
Time	-2.52	1.23	229	-2.04*
Condition	-4.24	2.79	229	-1.52
Disability	7.77	2.05	229	3.78**
Time*Condition	1.92	1.80	229	1.07
Time*Condition*Disability	-3.09	1.54	229	-2.00*
Aggression				
Intercept	58.99	1.74	86	33.89**
Time	-1.96	.88	227	-2.21*
Condition	-3.23	2.14	227	-1.51
Disability	8.44	1.78	227	4.73**
Time*Condition	1.45	1.31	227	1.10
Time*Condition*Disability	-2.80	1.21	227	-2.31*
Conduct Problems				
Intercept	59.66	2.35	78	25.35**
Time	-2.67	1.14	199	-2.34*
Condition	-.85	2.87	199	-.30
Disability	6.79	2.32	199	2.93**
Time*Condition	.48	1.73	199	.28
Time*Condition*Disability	-1.98	1.58	199	-1.25
Adaptive Skills				
Intercept	46.48	1.54	86	30.16**
Time	0.79	0.73	220	1.09
Condition	0.08	1.91	220	0.04
Disability	-8.01	1.52	220	-5.26**
Time*Condition	-1.71	1.08	220	-1.59
Time*Condition*Disability	2.92	1.02	220	2.85**
Social Skills				
Intercept	97.49	3.04	86	32.10**
Time	1.81	1.57	207	1.16
Condition	.01	3.85	207	.00
Disability	-13.00	3.10	207	-4.19**
Time*Condition	.31	2.37	207	.13
Time*Condition*Disability	1.66	2.20	207	.76

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Parent report

Statistically significant three-way interactions (time*condition*disability) are depicted below.



Teacher report

The time*condition*disability interaction was not significant for any of the teacher report of child behaviors.

Summary and Conclusion

- The impact of disability status on child behavior perceptions and on the effectiveness of CBC was found for parents but not for teachers.
- Across all behavioral outcomes, parents rated child behaviors more poorly for children who had an identified disability than for children who did not.
- Disability status did not affect teacher ratings of child behaviors with a single exception of adaptive skill.
- CBC effects as rated by parents were moderated by a child's disability status. Compared to parents of a child without a disability, those whose child had a disability and participated in CBC reported greater positive changes in child behaviors, including externalizing problems, hyperactivity, aggression, and adaptive skills.
- Although a child's disability may present a challenge for both parents and teachers, the perceived challenge appears to be greater for parents than for teachers. Also, parents of children with disabilities reported greater behavioral benefits from CBC than those with children without disabilities.

