



# RESEARCH RUNDOWN

## Comprehensive Assessment Outcomes of an Early Learning Autism Program

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We completed an analysis of archival data for preschool-aged children who participated in the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention program at St.Amant. We looked at information about autism symptoms, language, adaptive behaviours, and cognitive development. We found that children achieved significant improvements across all outcome measures after receiving one year of intervention.

### What is this research about?

Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) is the most evidence-supported treatment for children with autism. Much of the supporting evidence so far has come from small, carefully-controlled model programs. What is the effectiveness of EIBI when it's delivered in large, community-based settings, since this is how the majority of children access treatment? What can we say about the meaningful benefit to children in terms of their communication, social, and adaptive skills?

To answer these important questions, we completed an analysis of archival data for preschool-aged children who participated in the EIBI program at St.Amant.

### What did the researchers do?

We analyzed data collected at intake and after 12 months of service for 85 preschool-age children in the EIBI program at St.Amant. We emphasized learning measures that are defined in terms of specific behaviours or accomplishments that are desired for developing children.

### What did the researchers find?

We found that children achieved significant improvements across all outcome measures after receiving one year of intervention. Reductions in autism symptom severity were observed after one year of intervention. We also observed improvements in language skills, adaptive behaviour skills, cognitive level, and rate of development after one year of intervention. Overall, our results strongly supported the effectiveness of the EIBI program for preschool-aged children delivered at St.Amant.

### What you need to know:

We evaluated the effectiveness of an Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) program delivered in a large, community-based setting and found that children achieved significant improvements across all outcome measures after one year of intervention. The results from St.Amant's Autism Early Learning Program are consistent with the scientific finding that children make significant and sizable gains during the first year of EIBI.

### Why is it important?

This study is the first large-scale, community-based effectiveness study where the same standard measures were taken for every child at regular intervals. It is also the first to include a standardized language measure at intake and yearly intervals. The study provided insights on the robustness of EIBI under less-controlled, "real-world" conditions, and contributes to a growing body of literature aimed at identifying individual and program variables that may be critical to EIBI success. Overall, findings strongly supported the effectiveness of the EIBI program for preschool-age children delivered at St.Amant.



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## Additional Resources

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To find out more about St.Amant's Autism Services visit:  
<http://stamant.ca/programs/autism-services/>

Project completed 2012. Please see <http://stamant.ca/research/our-research/project-summaries/> for more project summaries.