Language impairment (LI) is the most prevalent disorder experienced by preschoolers in the US (Carlson et al. 2006). 75% of preschoolers with disabilities: LI is their primary or secondary disability. 46% of preschoolers with disabilities: LI is their primary diagnosis. Children with LI are at risk for lower outcomes in:
- Literacy development
- Mental health
- Economic opportunity (Law et al., 2006)

Parents’ role in their children’s education is particularly important for children with LI. IDEA mandates that educators and service providers give parents “meaningful opportunities” to be involved in their children’s education (IDEA, sec. 601).

Children with LI require more communicative interactions to learn language than typically developing (TD) children (Yoder et al., 1995).

Parents of children with LI tend to:
- Spend less time interacting with their children than parents of TD children (Morse et al., 2010).
- Be less responsive and engaged in their children’s communication development than parents of TD children (Ogli et al., 2006).

Numerous studies demonstrate that parents can be effective in promoting language interventions with their children with LI (Buschmann et al., 2009).

Additionally, studies show that online training programs are effective in promoting parenting skills (Baggett et al., 2010). Parents have reported high satisfaction with using online trainings (Baggett et al., 2010).

Online training may be an effective approach to training parents of children with LI to support their children’s language development.

The purpose of this study is to develop an online training program with personalized coaching for parents of preschoolers with LI.

Parents Plus trains parents to use Focused Stimulation (FS) to foster their children’s language development.
- Randomized controlled trial studies have shown that FS has positive effects on children’s language outcomes:
  - Increase vocabulary size in preschool children (Gonzalez et al., 1995).
  - Increase vocabulary and morphosyntax repertoires in toddlers (Garst et al., 1996).
  - Parents can implement FS as effectively as clinicians (Peay et al., 1981).

Parents Plus: Language Coach

Parents Plus trains parents to use Focused Stimulation (FS) as effectively as clinicians. Parents provide feedback based on the child’s response.

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Focused Stimulation has 3 major components or steps:
1. Parent models the language target during an interaction
   • Language target: Parents modeled a minimum of 5 times during an interaction in order to provide sufficient exposure (Law et al., 2001).
2. Parent pauses, giving child an opportunity to respond
   • Child is not required to repeat the target (Pesch & Lemer, 2006).
3. Parent provides feedback based on the child’s response.

The current study investigates the feasibility and social validity of the Parents Plus program during Beta Testing Round 1. Specifically, we examined:
1. Is the online (app-based) parent training program feasible?
2. What are parents’ perceptions of the online parent training program?
3. Is online (app-based) coaching feasible?
4. What are parents’ perceptions of online coaching?

Methods

Participants
All mothers who have preschoolers with language impairment and speak English in the home.

Advisory Board: 5 mothers
- 1 high school, 2 BA, and 2 MA
- All mothers who have preschoolers with language impairment.
- 1-3 Parents complete Parents Plus training on app
- 1-3 Parents complete Parents Plus on iOS app
- 1-3 Parents implement FS for 4 weeks with coaching
- 1-3 Parents complete feedback on FS use

Social Validity

Feasibility

Feasibility & Social Validity
- Overall, the Parents Plus iOS app is a feasible approach to train parents on FS.
- Content presentation is enjoyable and parents are able to learn.
- Additionally, parents had a positive perception of the Parents Plus app and their coach.

Next Steps
- Examine parents’ fidelity of implementation of FS and provide personalized coaching to support FS implementation.
- Make necessary revisions to Parents Plus content and procedures.
- Conduct Beta Testing 2 & revise as needed
- Conduct a randomized controlled trial to determine the promise of Parents Plus in improving parents’ language facilitation and children’s language skills.

Results