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Fragile X Syndrome: A Case Study in Behavioral Change

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FRAGILE X SYNDROME: A CASE STUDY IN BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

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Fragile X syndrome is a chromosomal abnormality which is the second leading cause of mental retardation after Downs Syndrome. Symptoms include low cognitive ability, poor social skills, and impaired memory. There is no known treatment. The present case study examined a behavioral intervention technique (discrimination training with self-modeling) as a possible treatment for Fragile X symptoms. The subject was a male, 7 years of age, who had been diagnosed with Fragile X two years previously. Prior to intervention, the subject had suffered a six-month decline in cognitive ability and social skills. In particular, the subject had difficulty exhibiting the appropriate behavior at the appropriate time of day. The intervention consisted of presenting the subject with a picture book, each page of which had a photograph of the subject engaged in a particular activity. When viewed sequentially, the picture book served as a discriminative aid for determining which activities were appropriate at which times. Following intervention, the subject showed improvement on five independent behavioral measures. The results suggest that self-modeling may be an effective treatment for Fragile X syndrome.