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Oral Presentation O3.2

**PARENT-TEACHER COLLABORATION WHEN STUDENTS HAVE AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS: THE ROLE OF TEACHER TRAINING**

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Over twenty years of research demonstrates the importance of collaborative relationships between parents and teachers, particularly when students have autism (e.g., Ruble & Dalrymple, 2002). However, many educators remain uninformed about autism (Helps, Newsom-Davis, & Callias, 1999) and untrained in working with parents (Lazar & Slostad, 1999). The present study evaluated an intervention designed to (a) provide educators with a basic theoretical understanding of autism, (b) encourage more positive attitudes toward parent-teacher collaboration, and (c) help educators to feel more comfortable and confident in their abilities to work with parents. The study followed an experimental design, with 30 education majors randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Participants in both conditions received general information about autism, but only those in the experimental condition received additional specific training in parent-teacher collaboration. Analyses of pre- and post-intervention measures revealed that both conditions were effective in increasing (a) knowledge about autism, (b) positive attitudes toward collaboration, and (c) comfort and confidence levels in working with parents of children with autism. Moreover, the experimental condition yielded significantly higher results than the control condition, providing support for the specific training in collaboration.