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A virtual intervention to support preschoolers with autism

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A virtual intervention to support preschoolers with autism

Families who have a young child with autism have identified communication in social situations as a priority area for intervention. The Hanen Centre in Ontario developed the *More Than Words*[®] program, where parents learn strategies to support their child's development of social communication and play skills. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the program to be delivered to families virtually. In partnership with the Hanen Centre, my doctoral research explores the program's effectiveness in improving children's skills development and parent-child interactions, and the families' experiences participating in the program virtually. The results will provide the Hanen Centre and over 5,000 clinicians who deliver the program worldwide with quality improvements and program adaptations they can implement to ensure a positive, impactful experience for all families. Beyond the pandemic, a virtual delivery option would eliminate accessibility barriers and provide more families with the opportunity to access this program.