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Ramey, D., & Healy, O. (2021). *The Impact of Combined Within- and Across-Activity Choice on the Indices of Happiness and Unhappiness of Children with ASD*. Poster session presented at Association for Behavior Analysis International 15th Annual Autism Conference.

**Document Version:**  
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# The Impact of Combined Within- and Across-Activity Choice on the Indices of Happiness and Unhappiness of Children with ASD

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## Introduction

- Quality of life (QOL) is determined by both happiness and self-determination (Schalock & Alonso, 2002).
- Happiness is a private event often measured through verbal self-report, but this can be problematic for individuals with ASD (Parsons et al., 2012).
- Instead, overt indicators of mood can be defined and measured among young children with ASD (Ramey et al., 2018).
- Choice is thought to enhance the self-determination of children with disabilities, but choice is limited for children with ASD (Elliott & Dillenburger, 2016).

**Research question:** Can a choice intervention package improve the happiness and self-determination of young children with ASD?

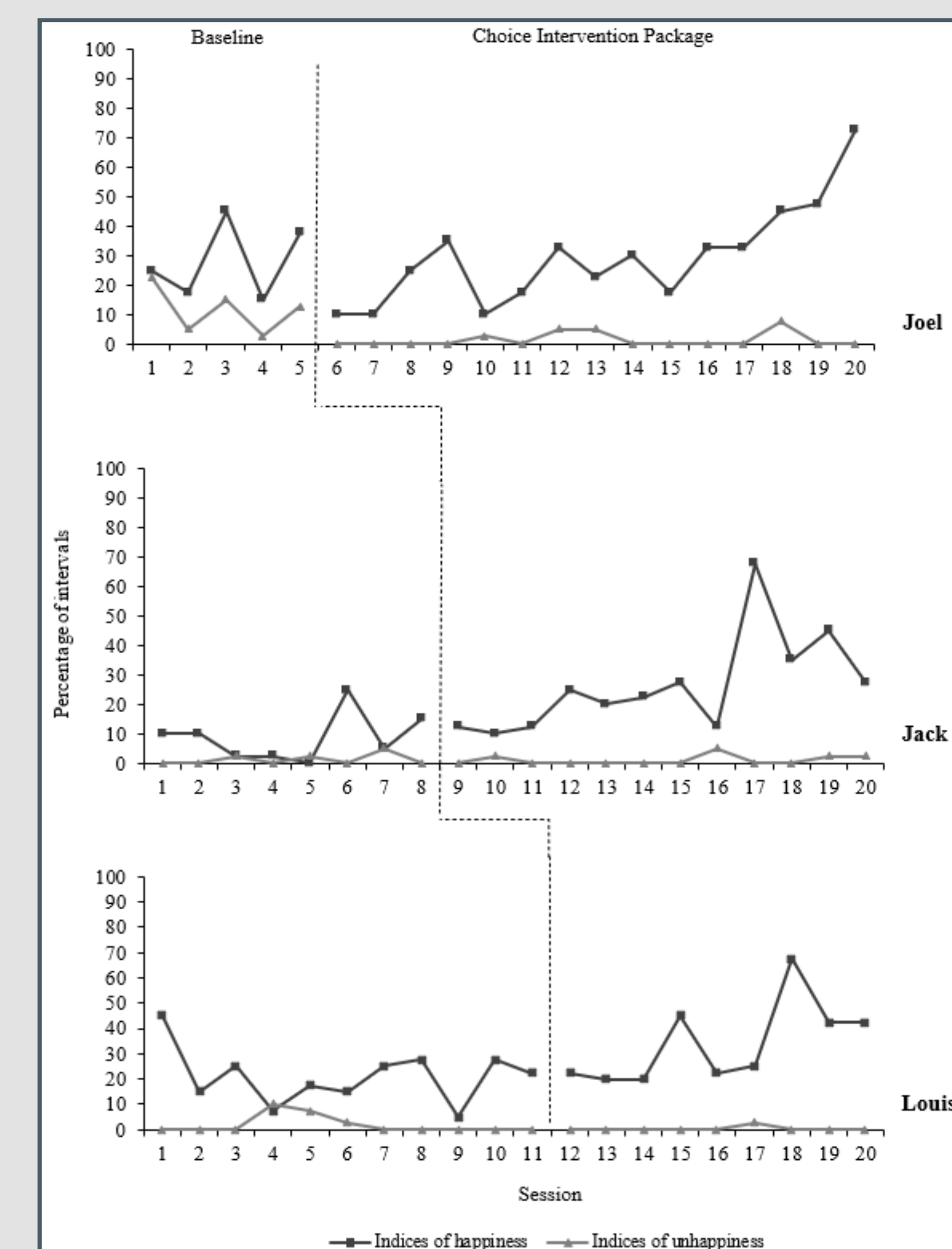
## Method

- 3 boys with ASD ( $M = 4.4$  years)
- Setting: ABA-based preschool
- Dependent variables:
  - 1) Indices of happiness
  - 2) Indices of unhappiness
  - 3) On-task behaviour
- Choice-intervention package within DTT:
  - 1) Choice of reinforcer
  - 2) Choice of activity
  - 3) Choice of materials

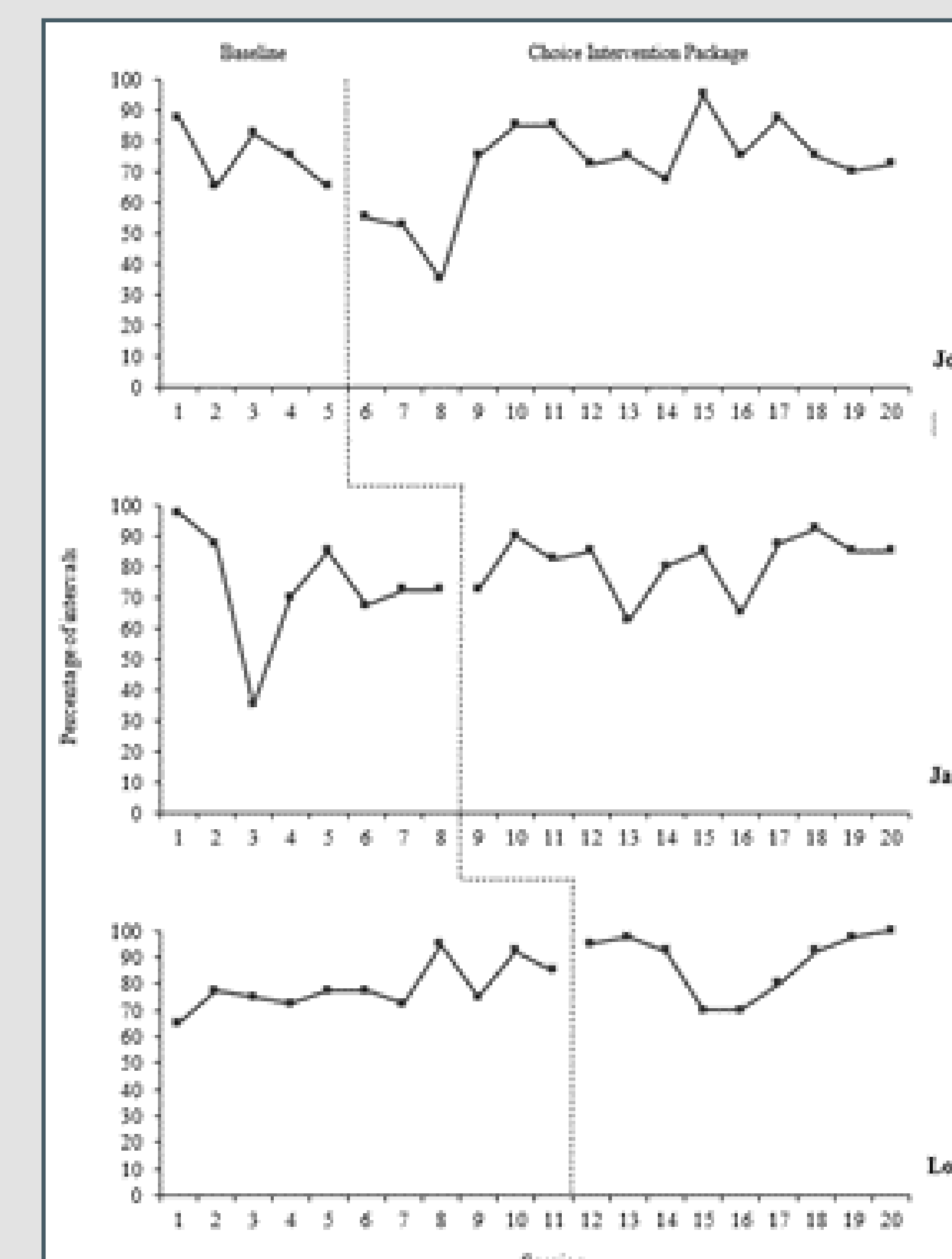
## Results

**The provision of choice improved the mood of all three children, while on-task behaviour improved slightly for two children.**

**Figure 1**  
Indices of happiness and unhappiness for Joel, Jack, and Louis.



**Figure 2**  
On-task behaviour for Joel, Jack, and Louis.



**Table 1**  
Tau-U scores and omnibus effect sizes for three dependent variables.

Participant	Indices of Happiness	Indices of Unhappiness	On-Task Behaviour
Joel	Tau-U = -0.0	Tau-U = 0.9	Tau-U = -0.1
Jack	Tau-U = 0.8	Tau-U = 0.1	Tau-U = 0.2
Louis	Tau-U = 0.4	Tau-U = 0.2	Tau-U = 0.2
<b>Omnibus Effect Size</b>	Tau-U = 0.4 (Moderate)	Tau-U = 0.3 (Moderate)	Tau-U = 0.1 (Small)

## Discussion

- Choice can be easily embedded into the DTT programming of children with ASD.
- Providing more opportunities for choice was moderately effective in improving the mood of the participants.
- Small effects for task engagement were also considered meaningful.
- According to the TARF-R, procedures were considered socially valid by teachers.
- **Conclusion:** Choice diversity can improve the overall happiness and self-determination of young children with ASD.
- **Future research:** Component analysis

## Literature Cited

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