

## A Narrative Review of Research on the Play of Children with Cerebral Palsy

Poster title  
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### ABSTRACT

Spontaneous play has important implications for children's social, cognitive, and linguistic development (Glascott Burriss & Tsao, 2002). For children with cerebral palsy (CP), play experiences may be shaped by a number of factors including mobility and dexterity restrictions (Pfeifer et al., 2011), communication means (Anderson, Balandin, & Clendon, 2011), and the social environment (McCarthy & Light, 2005). While the general participation of children with CP in home and community life has been well explored to date, their play interactions and the factors impacting on these have not been a major focus. This poster presents the findings of a narrative review into the play behaviours and play experiences of children with cerebral palsy.

Providing background  
information and  
rationale

### Aim

The objective of this study was to review research examining the play of children with cerebral palsy. This included, specifically,

Listing the research  
aims / questions

- (1) The inclusion or exclusion of children with CP from play interactions
- (2) The play partners, behaviours, and resources of children with CP
- (3) The factors affecting the play experiences of children with CP.

### Method

This review was conducted in line with the protocol outlined by the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses – Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2009). Research sources included published journal articles, unpublished masters and doctoral theses, and published abstracts of 1000 words or longer. Sources cited in included papers were also considered in the review. The search was limited to English-language publications spanning the years 1985 – 2015.

Summarizing the  
methodology

The titles and/or abstracts of all resulting papers were initially screened for suitability. Included papers were required to have a focus population of children with cerebral palsy, aged between 0-12 years. Studies incorporating children with CP amongst a broader group of children with 'physical disability' were included as long as results pertaining to the children with CP could be isolated. Papers with an exclusive focus on teenagers or young adults, or on children with other diagnoses were excluded. Included papers were also required to focus on child-initiated or unstructured play (alone, or with peers or family members), engaged in for recreation. Papers examining play used for therapeutic purposes were excluded. Intervention studies directed at children's unstructured play skills were, however, included as the data offered information about children's play skills and their capacity to evolve.

The first author conducted the initial screenings. From this point, additional members of the research team co-rated all potential papers for suitability. All included papers were read by two members of the research team, and a range of information extracted using a standardised form. Included papers were also evaluated for quality.

## Results and Conclusion

This study is currently in progress. Preliminary results suggest that, while factors influencing the general participation of children with CP in school, family, and community life have been well researched to date, relatively little is known about their specific play behaviours and play interactions. An overview of research on the play experiences of children with CP will be provided in this poster presentation. Implications for clinical practice will also be discussed, with a particular focus on the play of children with CP and complex communication needs.

Outlining the results,  
and offering a  
conclusion

## References

Anderson, K., Balandin, S., and Clendon, S. (2011). "He cares about me and I care about him." Children's experiences of friendship with peers who use AAC. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 27(2), 77-90.

Including up to 6  
references

Glascott Burriss, K. & Tsao, L. (2002). Review of research: How much do we know about the importance of play in child development?, *Childhood Education*, 78(4), 230-233.

McCarthy, J., & Light, J. C. (2005). Attitudes toward individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication: Research review. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 21, 41-55.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 151(4), 264-269.

Pfeifer, L. I., Pacciulio, A. M., Santos, C. A. D., Santos, J. L. D., & Stagnitti, K. E. (2011). Pretend play of children with cerebral palsy. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 31(4), 390-402.

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*This abstract has been modified from its original format for the purpose of providing an example for the ISAAC 2020 conference.*