

Sample Abstract: Poster

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

Poster title
No author details
Maximum of 15 words

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 PRISMA protocol. Research sources included journal articles, unpublished theses, and published abstracts of >1000 words. Sources cited in included papers were also considered. The search was limited to English-language publications spanning the years 1985 - 2015.

Summarizing the methodology

Included papers were required to have a focus population of children with CP, 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, 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.

At least two members of the research team co-rated each of the 134 shortlisted papers for suitability, resulting in 15 total included papers. These were evaluated by the team for quality and content.

Results

The reviewed literature clearly demonstrated that children with CP have the capacity to be playful. Notions of play included independent and collaborative play, but also vicarious play (watching others) and play for therapy. Play interactions tended to be slower and less frequent, with children with CP often adopting a more passive role. Children with CP were also less likely to terminate or alter a play interaction suggesting that they may be a somewhat "captive audience". A wide range of factors influence play success for children with CP, including their body structures and functions, play partners, and play environments.

Concise summary of key results

Conclusion

Play experiences of children with CP have not been widely documented. Few studies have examined the effects of age, gender, motivation, or culture on the play experiences of children with CP. And, while several studies have examined the impact of technology and adaptive toys for general inclusion, none have examined their impact on self-initiated play for children with CP. Finally, very little research has examined the way that children with CP play with their peers and siblings in naturalistic contexts. Given the importance of self-initiated play in children's development, continued research in this area will provide a basis for better intervention and support for children with CP, their families, and their playmates.

Outlining future implications 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.

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.

Abstract is less than 750 words

This abstract has been modified from its original format for the purpose of providing an example for the ISAAC 2018 conference.