

Subtheme:

Innovative perspectives on physical education, physical activity, health and wellbeing and sport

The impact of wellbeing on the physical activities of occupational therapy (OT) for a child with dyspraxia.

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Background and purpose.

Structured and supervised physical activities (such as OT) that a child engages within their day are included within the domain of Physical Education according to Bailey (2005). The research considers such OT physical activities and presents a case study of one child with dyspraxia who has daily OT over the period three school terms. The purpose of the study was to consider the impact of wellbeing on the physical activities involved in the OT. This research questions how the child's wellbeing (linked to parental attachment, friendships and feelings) impacts the physical activities of her OT sessions. For the case study child, she had poor: coordination; body awareness; organisation skills and her OT programme focused on the inhibition of reflexes (resisted crawl and cat).

Methods

A case study design was used, as Jupp (2006) reports this is a way in which researchers can collect multidimensional data through observations within the OT sessions, (her ability to complete cat and resisted crawl), observations within her playtimes, and wellbeing questionnaires. Structured observations were completed and data analysis was completed through coding, sorting and trend analysis.

Results

The biggest impact for the case study child was the holiday break. Each time she returned to boarding school and was separated from her mother her wellbeing levels had dropped dramatically to the lowest points within the school year.

Conclusions and recommendations

For the case study child the separation from her mother, particularly at the start of terms, was key. Within the OT sessions, the child would need to have repeated instructions, to ensure she was not distracted by her feelings of neglect. It is recommended that an innovative programme of OT is continued within the school holiday period to help prevent the drop in both wellbeing and her ability to complete the physical activities.