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# You've Got a Friend in Me: Effectiveness of Social Skills Interventions for Children with ADHD

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# **You've Got a Friend in Me: Effectiveness of Social Skills Interventions for Children with ADHD**

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree at Thomas Jefferson University

**Objectives of Presentation:** At the conclusion of the session, the learner will be able to:

- 1) Describe the relationship between social skills interventions and participation in school based activities for children with ADHD
- 2) Interpret the current evidence available on the effectiveness of social skills interventions for children with ADHD
- 3) Apply knowledge of current evidence for social skills interventions to relevant areas of occupational therapy practice through group discussion

**PICO:** What is the evidence to support social skills interventions with students who are diagnosed with ADHD to improve participation in school activities?

## **Methods:**

- Databases searched: CINAHL, ERIC, MEDLINE Ovid, PsychINFO Ovid, Scopus
- Search terms: Child\*, Pediatric\*, Elementary school\*, ADHD, Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Student, Social skills training, Social group, Peer interaction, Social skill\*, School performance, Academic performance, Social participation
- 12 articles were used for review and critiqued using Appendix M & N: Effectiveness Study Quality Checklist and the PRISMA Checklist for Systematic Reviews

## **Results:**

*Theoretical approach:* The strongest evidence to improve social skills was the use of a combined (cognitive-behavioral and play-based). Typical cognitive-behavioral interventions included role-playing and modeling. Play-based interventions included group sports, free play, and table-top games. There is preliminary support for the use of a developmental or solely play-based approach. Currently, there is no support for the use of a solely cognitive-behavioral approach.

*Outcome measures:* There is a lack of consistency with outcome measures that are used to assess the effectiveness of social skills training. The Conners 3rd edition may be more sensitive in detecting changes, specifically on the domains of hyperactivity/impulsivity, inattention and learning problems.

*Context:* Moderate evidence exists for social skills intervention implemented in school & camp. There is conflicting evidence for the most effective type of social context.

*Parental involvement:* There is conflicting evidence for the use of parent involvement in the intervention process.

Based on the evidence, a combined theoretical approach (cognitive-behavioral and play-based) provides the most evidence on the effectiveness of social skills interventions. Additionally, more research is needed to determine the most effective protocol for social skills interventions.

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