

EXPLORING HOW OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INTERVENTION INFLUENCES THE PLAY OF PRE-SCHOOLERS AS PERCEIVED BY THEIR PARENTS.

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INTRODUCTION:

To the young child, play is life itself. Play fills the mind and body, mentally, physically and emotionally. A child engrossed in play is inventive, free and happy. Through the variety and depth of play experiences the child learns and grows; it is serious business. However for many parents play is seen as recreation, as something which should only take place in the free time left over from more productive occupations. For occupational therapy intervention to be successful it is therefore important not only that the child develops their play skills, but that their parents come to have a greater understanding of the importance of their play and so will become more engaged in promoting it.

OBJECTIVES:

This presentation aims to present a study which is comparing parents' perceptions of the play of their pre-school aged children, before and after occupational therapy intervention

METHODS:

The study includes 60 parents whose pre-school age children, with developmental disabilities, are attending three psycho-educational centres in the municipalities of Ilion, Keratsini and Peristeri in Greece. The families live in impoverished socio-economic conditions making it particularly difficult for the parents to provide adequate play opportunities. The parents complete a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of their child's play, prior to and on completion of six months occupational therapy intervention. The intervention programme aims to not only develop the childrens' play skills but also the parents' involvement in their play, respecting the particular difficulties of their everyday lives.

RESULTS:

Results will demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention and will lead to the further development of the programme.

CONCLUSION:

Effective occupational therapy aiming to develop play skills requires intervention aimed not only at the children but also at their parents who are the main providers of play opportunities in their daily lives.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRACTISE EVIDENCE BASE OF O/T:

Play is an essential part of learning and enjoyment. Parents coping with difficult socio-economic conditions require particular intervention to help them support and develop their child's play opportunities.