

Community participation; A Summer Camp for Children with Sensory Regulatory Disorders.

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Introduction:

A community setting provides the best occupational therapy practice arena to achieve the service potency necessary for full societal participation for young children with regulatory processing challenges. The AOTA Practice Framework amplifies our concepts of context for occupational therapy. The summer camp program presented will describe the execution of this broadened context. The program has successfully served 3 to 5 year old campers each summer for 3 years. Camp includes activities to enrich physical, social, cultural, temporal and personal context of the children and their families. Children with sensory regulatory disorders (SRD) need developmental skills and increased community participation, but cannot tolerate the overloaded sensory experience of typical camps available in their community. Evidence-based studies support a multi faceted intervention model. Our program offers this as a blend of clinic and community opportunities scheduled throughout the day. This alternative approach for families reduces the social isolation of their children. The camp addresses preschooler's needs unmet in their community. Programming promotes adaptation in harmony with city opportunities. Sensitive to the lived experience of special needs children, a protective clinic structure with the spontaneous environment of New York City is offered. Guided and graded multiple challenges provide the campers with advantages for growth and integration textured with play opportunities. Cultural shifting, bridging two communities in order to foster the inclusion of our children in to the mainstream of their community is paramount. Family empowerment to identify behaviors disruptive to them to target goals is fundamental.

Objectives:

- Review symptoms of sensory regulatory problems.
- Discuss children's social emotional competencies.
- Broaden community immersion strategies.
- Learn empowerment tools.

Discussion: Use of a qualitative parent's questionnaire to design programs.

Results: Examine a newly developed Social Skills Inventory as an instrument to assess children's acquisition of social skills.

Contribution to Practice: Present a model program by occupational therapists and caregivers in a program context that reduces cost of service and increases community accessibility.

Conclusions: Present a summer camp program, piloted over 3 years. Describe the blending of naturalistic and clinic settings for programming allowing children with hidden disabilities to access their potential in community participation.