

What are the Factors Influencing Participation in Leisure Activities in School-Aged Children with Cerebral Palsy?

childhood
disability
LINK



Summary

This study examined the level of involvement in leisure activities for children 6-12 years of age with cerebral palsy (CP). The Children's Assessment of Participation and Enjoyment was the evaluation tool used, and was carried out in children who were able to actively participate in completing this measure. Results showed that children with CP are actively involved in a wide range of leisure activities, although they were less likely to participate in social and active-physical activities, when compared to typically developing peers. Their level of enjoyment of these activities was comparable to their peers without disability. Mastery motivation (the level of persistence in performing challenging tasks) and pleasure of mastery were predictive of greater involvement in leisure activities. Children receiving rehabilitation services were more likely to be involved in skill-based and more likely to enjoy active-physical activities. Barriers to involvement to particular leisure activity domains included cognitive and behavioral difficulties, activity limitations, and parental stress levels. Benefits of participation in leisure activities are numerous and include promoting health and fitness, developing skill competencies, fostering friendships with peers, developing personal interests and autonomy, and simply enjoying life. Therefore, it is important that rehabilitation specialists specifically ask children with CP what leisure activities they wish to participate in, and address the obstacles to participation in these worthwhile activities

What families and practitioners should know

Children with CP participate in a wide range of leisure activities and experience a high level of enjoyment. Participation is lower for social and physical activities, when compared to peers. Family stress levels and child factors such as intrinsic motivation, fears and self-confidence should be addressed to promote greater involvement. Rehabilitation services appear to facilitate knowledge of available adapted programs in the community and may enhance competence and confidence in leisure activity participation. Behavioral and cognitive challenges and other limitations may hinder a child's ability to participate in particular leisure activities, and ongoing therapeutic interventions and adaptive strategies in these areas may need to be considered at school age.

Reference

[Majnemer, A., Shevell, M., Law, M., Birnbaum, R., Chilingaryan, G., Rosenbaum, P. & Poulin, C. Participation and enjoyment of leisure activities in school-aged children with cerebral palsy. \(2008\) *Devel Med Child Neurol*, 50: 751-758.](#)