The Role of Therapeutic Listening in Social Participation for Preschoolers with Special Needs

Author/Presenter: Edward B. Lopez, M.S., OTR/L
Contributing Author: Laurette Olson, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Introduction

- Social development is an important factor in childhood development, especially for school readiness. Environmental factors such as auditory sensitivity and the use of therapeutic listening have shown to significantly improve social development.

- The focus of this study is on the role of Therapeutic Listening (TL) in improving social participation in children with special needs, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and auditory sensitivity.

Methods

1. Four preschool children were identified with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder with auditory sensitivity.
2. Music selections were changed every 2 weeks to maintain interest and adherence to the TL protocol.
3. An Occupational Therapist supervised and guided the TL protocol.
4. Data was collected intermittently throughout the study.
5. Parent, teacher, and therapist questionnaires were completed at the beginning and end of the study.

Barriers to Social Participation

- Difficulty with transitions and oppositional behaviors
- Engages in frequent stimulatory behaviors (e.g., eye squinting, scripted movements)
- Food sensitivities
- Auditory defensive: Meltdowns associated with covering of ears
- Needs verbal and physical prompting to initiate peer interaction
- Difficulty with verbal language

Measure of Change in Auditory Sensitivity

- Parent Reporting: A measure of decreased auditory sensitivity and overall improvement in the use of TL for the 3 children who either completed or partially completed the study.
- Teacher Reporting: As a measure of decreased auditory sensitivity and overall improvement in the use of TL for the 2 children who completed the study.

Measure of Change in Following Directions

- Parent Reporting: An increase in ability to follow directions without prompting.
- Teacher Reporting: An increase in ability to follow directions without prompting.

School Personnel Reporting

- Child 1: Has shown significant improvement in following directions and overall social behaviors.
- Child 2: Has shown significant improvement in following directions and overall social behaviors.
- Child 3: Has shown significant improvement in following directions and overall social behaviors.
- Child 4: Has shown significant improvement in following directions and overall social behaviors.

Measurements in Social Participation

- Parent Reporting: An increase in the ability to interact with peers and teachers.
- Teacher Reporting: An increase in the ability to interact with peers and teachers.

Conclusion

- The study suggests that TL, when used in conjunction with a collaborative approach, can improve social participation in preschoolers with special needs, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder and auditory sensitivity.
- Future research should explore the long-term effects of TL on social participation and identify potential predictors of success.

Contributors

- Contributing Author: Laurette Olson, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
- Author/Presenter: Edward B. Lopez, M.S., OTR/L

References


Note: The image contains visual aids and tables that illustrate the study's findings and the impact of Therapeutic Listening on social participation. The text is organized to enhance readability and comprehension for a comprehensive understanding of the study's outcomes.

Keywords: Therapeutic Listening, Social Participation, Preschoolers, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Auditory Sensitivity.