

Parent Accommodations to the Environment to Increase Participation in Children with Autism: A Secondary Data Analysis

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Introduction

- Sensory experiences of a child with autism affect what and how a family does
- Family routines are important, but children with autism have difficulty participating in family routines due to sensory preferences
- Parents accommodate routines and environmental modifications can be helpful

Research Question

How do parents of children with autism accommodate the environment to address sensory responses in order to increase participation in family routines?

Methods

- Secondary data analysis using Study 3 of the Sensory Experiences Project (PI Grace Baranek)
- Data consists of qualitative interviews with parents of children with autism and scores on SEQ 2.1
- Analyzed 19 interviews of children with significantly high SEQ 2.1 scores
- Thematic analysis of interviews (Braun & Clarke



Results

Teamwork

• “...we have to split up, you take him there and I’ll stay home with so-and-so, or if grandpa is with us, then grandpa stays home with Brae, and we take our other child out.”

Time Matters

• “We have taken him to the fair occasionally, again I try to go when there’s the least people, a quieter time.”

Control of the Sensory Environment

• “And I don’t run the vacuum cleaner when he’s around- that’s for sure!...I use the broom!”

“Whatever I need to do”

• “It was kind of sad, but I mean, he doesn’t like it, he doesn’t like it.”

Discussion

- Unlike other studies in the literature, this study looked specifically at environmental accommodations as opposed to general accommodations
- Parents actively accommodate features of the environment to meet the sensory needs of their children
- Importance of the social, sensory, physical and temporal environment
- Teamwork and time: environmental accommodations not explored in the current literature
- Results reflect how environmental factors transact to impact occupational engagement

Implications for OS/OT

- Contributes to a broader understanding of transaction in family routines and occupations
- Defines social, temporal, physical and sensory environments as areas for intervention
- Importance of collaborative family-centered practice in natural environments

References

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