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A Collaborative Approach to School-Based Occupational Therapy Sensorimotor Programs

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Abstract

In the past decade, the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disabilities (ID) has increased. Sensory processing is an area of need for individuals with ASD and ID that requires specialized intervention services. In best practices, these services are delivered by an interdisciplinary team, often consisting of an occupational therapist, speech language pathologist, board certified behavior analyst, and special education teacher. There has been limited research examining interdisciplinary collaboration between professionals on the team. The purpose of this study was to empirically examine the interdisciplinary team practices at a special education center. This research employed interview methods and qualitative analysis. Results informed a conceptual practice model for highly intentional collaboration. The concentric circle model depicts interdisciplinary team priorities by placing students at the center, followed by individualized and classroom level sensorimotor programming, and finally encompassed by intentional collaboration. Essential components of intentional collaboration are: taking action, reinforcing team values, communicating, understanding interdisciplinary roles, and addressing barriers.