

## **Title: Children with disabilities and their parents' views of occupational participation needs**

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**Major Finding: Discrepancies were found between parental and child ratings of occupational competence and value of occupations using the Child Occupational Self-Assessment (COSA).**

### **Participants:**

- 6 children with motor skill challenges
  - 5 male, 1 female; ages 7-13; mean age=10 years, 5 months
  - Diagnoses included ADD and ADHD, CP, Asperger's Syndrome, fine motor delay, and others
  - 2 children had multiple diagnoses; all were verbal and of average intelligence
- 6 parents of children in the study
  - Ages 30-47; mean age=40
  - Parents varied widely in their marital status, occupations, and educational levels

**Method:** Children and parents were interviewed separately and administered the COSA. Parents were instructed to answer questions on the COSA to reflect how they thought their children would answer them.

**Analysis:** Audiotaped interviews were analyzed for recurring themes. Data from the COSA were analyzed to identify gaps between ratings by parents and children for Occupational Competence and Values.

### **Findings:**

- Significant discrepancies were found between parent and child COSA ratings; children and parents disagreed on 63.5% of Competence and 61% of Values responses. Substantial discrepancies (discrepancies of 2 or more points) occurred on 20.5% of Competence and 19% of Values ratings.
- Children saw themselves as more competent than their parents thought they would. Parents tended to rate items as more problematic than their children. Parents placed lower Values ratings on items than their children 58% of the time when Values discrepancies were present.
- Children demonstrated a slightly higher overall satisfaction with occupations (Values and Competence ratings in agreement) than their parents.
- Themes reported by children in the focus group included academics, support, and social participation as issues affecting their activity participation. Parents identified these three themes plus academics.

**Conclusion:** Parent and child perceptions of the child's occupational competence, values, and satisfaction with occupations frequently differ.

**Implications for future research:** Future research could examine current methods of determining whether children qualify for services to promote adequate distribution of resources to those in need.

### **Evidence- based practice implications:**

- **Occupational therapists should listen not only to parental concerns but also those expressed by the child, since the concerns of the two groups may not always correspond.**
- **The COSA provides a structured tool for listening to the child's perspective of his or her own needs and goals.**