Promoting social inclusion strategies for children and young people with disabilities

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Objectives

- Social Inclusion
- Camping as an Inclusive Occupation
- Benefits and Limitations
- Strategies to Enhance Inclusion
- The Future Vision
“Inclusion is built on the premise that all children should be valued for their unique abilities and included as essential members of a community. Inclusion is not a place or a practice; it is a way of thinking.” (Hall et al 2013).
There are a number of residential summer camps in Britain today sadly less than 2% of our young people currently benefit from them.

Going to summer camp is not something most British children or parents currently consider as “part of the culture”

To launch a campaign to highlight the benefits of mixed ability summer camps and to change hearts and minds would be a great investment for the future.

Camping as an Inclusive Occupation

(How summer camps could change Britain, 2010)
Limitations—Empirical research of mixed camps found…

Campers with disabilities

- At times campers felt that the group did not totally understand or accept the potential to contribute

  “Sometimes they think I can’t do things like them, so I just hang back and don't do it.”

Campers without disabilities

- Felt a great deal of effort was needed on their behalf to included campers with disabilities particularly with behavior impairments

- Competitive activities produced negative attitudes and perceptions

(Devine & Parr, 2007:400)
Benefits - Empirical research of mixed camps found…

Campers with disabilities

“It has taught me to cope with life. People stare at me, but I can go anywhere.”

“Other kids could get to know kids like me.”

“I looked for ways to be included, I didn't just ask for help.”

(Dawson & Liddicoat, 2009) (Devine & Parr, 2007:400-405)
Benefits - Empirical research of mixed camps found…

Campers without disabilities

“I wouldn’t have learnt as much, or get to do new things in a different way.”

“Encouraged us to be friendly and talk to each other and forget about the disability and work together.”

“We found things in common not things that aren’t the same.”

“Felt good”.

(Dawson & Liddicoat, 2009)
Benefits and Limitations

*Staff influence:*
- Exposure to a nurturing environment
- Learning positive behaviour and values
- Development of a sense of competence
- Development of a positive plan for the future

_Daud and Carruthers (2008)_
## Strategies to Enhance Inclusion…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing attitudes</td>
<td>Inclusion training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Individuals</td>
<td>Getting to know the young person and their family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets</td>
<td>Ensuring targets are being developed and met for inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASK/Communication</td>
<td>Ensuring staff/service users are taught and shown different methods of communication and asking the young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Disability</td>
<td>Education/Peer Buddy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(James et al 2011)
Empirical research from Dawson & Liddicoat, (2009) found campers with disabilities had positive experiences of camp, and the experience can improve the child's own view of their disability. Research found that:

- Being able to participate in outdoor activities provided a place to have fun and promoted independence.

Other benefits were:

- Promoted inclusion
- Built an inclusive community and offer the opportunity to promote citizenship, empowerment and community capacity building.
- Improved areas of communication, making choices, cooperation, taking responsibilities, independence, self-esteem and building friendships.

(Brookman et al, 2003)
The Future Vision for Occupational Therapy

- Promoting Inclusive environments for **ALL** children and young people
- Specific training programmes to enhance knowledge base
- Challenging inclusion within working environments, creating more inclusive activities and occupations
- Adapting existing activities and interventions, to benefit all

Occupational Therapists could be at the forefront of this vision, by promoting, encouraging and sharing their specialist skills, Occupational Therapists can promote adaptable and inclusive leisure occupations (Scholl et al, 2005)
Conclusion

British society has a diverse range of young people from different backgrounds, cultures and abilities. Promoting the benefits of mixed residential summer camps could enrich children’s lives, personally, and socially, while offering the opportunity to learn valuable citizenship skills.

Our aim for this presentation is for you to consider the benefits of early intervention of educating all children about disability. This is to encourage awareness from an early age.

By creating groups that include children with and without disabilities we can aim to prevent segregation in society by changing the stigma and societies perceptions attached to having a disability.

(How summer camps could change Britain, 2010)
Thank you for listening.
References


References

How Summer Camps could change Britain (2010)


Frederick, K. (2005) Lets take the special out of special needs. The Times Educational Supplement pg15 No4643
Additional Reading

