

An Occupational Therapist's Role in Facilitating Sustained Participation in Adaptive Sports for Children & Adolescence with Disabilities

The Healthy People 2030 national objective strives to increase the proportion of children and adolescents who play sports in the United States. (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2021). For children and adolescents with disabilities, there is a significant imbalance in the level of sports participation from their peers. (National Survey of Children's Health, 2017). The American Occupational Therapy Association's vision for 2025 states that occupational therapists are responsible for maximizing health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities by facilitating participation. (AOTA, 2024). Adaptive sports programs are an opportunity for children and adolescents with disabilities to participate. Adaptive sports can be defined as modified activities that allow individuals with disabilities to engage in sports. (National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability, 2020).

Occupational therapists can provide modifications including changes to rules, equipment, or the environment, to accommodate a range of physical, cognitive, or sensory disabilities. The goal is to provide equal opportunities for participation. This systematic review analyzes an occupational therapist's role in facilitating sustained participation in adaptive sports for children and adolescents with disabilities. Our search strategy utilized research databases, including AJOT, BJOT, and the TSU library, to locate studies. The search terms selected included "adaptive sports," "children," "adolescents," "disability," "sports," "occupational therapy," "role," "consultation," and "advocacy." The inclusion criteria focused on children and adolescents aged

3 to 21 years with a disability. When analyzing for quality, we utilized the CASP Checklist for Qualitative Research, and when analyzing for risk of bias, we utilized a modified Cochrane Risk of Bias tool. We anticipate finding evidence to support that OTs can facilitate sustained participation through advocacy, consultation, activity analysis, and environmental modifications. This systematic review will clarify occupational therapy's role in the domain of adaptive sports, which aligns with AOTA's vision for 2025 and the Healthy People 2030 national health objective. Relevant stakeholders include current occupational therapy practitioners and program directors of adaptive sports programs. Future research is intended to build off our generalized overview of the impact of all adaptive sports programs.