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Dance & Down Syndrome: Parental Perceptions on Dance and Movement-Based Interventions

Ami A. Parke

Grand Valley State University, parkea@mail.gvsu.edu

Cara J. Murray

Grand Valley State University, zoncac@mail.gvsu.edu

Rebecca D. Need

Grand Valley State University, needr@mail.gvsu.edu

Kathryn Edick

Grand Valley State University

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Dance & Down Syndrome: Parental perceptions on dance and movement-based interventions

Ami Parke, Cara Murray, Rebecca Need, Jeanine Beasley, & Kathryn Edick

Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to identify parent or guardian perceptions on the benefits of dance and movement-based interventions for their child who has Down syndrome. Individuals with Down syndrome face limitations in social-emotional skills, physical skills, and life skills, and research on the benefits of dance and movement-based interventions demonstrated some evidence of improvements in these skills. Researchers utilized a parent focus group in order to gain insight into how dance impacts their children with Down syndrome. A number of themes emerged from the data analysis process including improved movement, psychological well-being, and routine and retention. The theme of improved movement included concepts such as motor planning, balance, coordination, exercise, and increased strength and tone. The theme of psychological well-being included increased happiness, connecting with typically developing peers, and a sense of belonging. The theme of routine and retention included ideas about structure, routine, and learning and applying skills. The implications for dance and movement-based intervention in the field of occupational therapy are discussed, as well as suggestions for further research studies on this topic.