

Research on the Application of Art Therapy in Intervention for Children with Autism

Bin Xia, Xiya Zheng, Yizhou Bu, Qiuyi Jiang, Zongchen Han

Qilu University of Technology (Shandong Academy of Sciences), Jinan, Shandong, 250353, China

ABSTRACT

Art therapy, as a non-verbal intervention method, demonstrates unique value in the rehabilitation education of children with autism. From the perspective of aesthetic education, this study systematically explores the theoretical foundations, model design, implementation strategies, assessment dimensions, and practical pathways of art therapy in interventions for children with autism. The research finds that art therapy can effectively leverage the visual advantages and perceptual characteristics of autistic children. Through multimodal artistic activities such as painting, music, and drama, it promotes the coordinated development of their emotional expression, social communication, and aesthetic experience. Combining structure with free expression, and implementing collaborative efforts between families and institutions, are key to enhancing intervention outcomes. This study provides a systematic framework and practical recommendations for art therapy practices for children with autism.

KEYWORDS

Art therapy; Children with autism; Aesthetic education; Intervention model; Multimodal art

1 Introduction

Autistic kids typically show signs like not being able to talk or play like others, liking some things over everything else, and doing certain motions over and over, plus it might be hard to manage feelings and special things in senses. Though there were also some success in behavior modification, however there is lack of internal motivating feeling and emotional expression. And I can use something other than the word talking with someone who is autistic and they're having trouble verbally expressing themselves, and then I might be able to paint, or sing, do some acting, some theatre type thing as another form of communication. The past few years have seen more work around making what people say look at us when we're not just about making things better, now that's about giving those little guys better things with which we can get enjoyment. But previous investigation always pays attention to one kind of art form only and does not provide the integration frame work. In order to construct an overall art therapy intervention system framework for clarity on its foundation, reason for existence, implementation strategy, evaluation parameters, as well as real-life path forward for practitioners working in frontlines.

2 Theoretical Foundations of Art Therapy

2.1 Core Concepts and Types of Art Therapy

Art therapy is when the artistic thing becomes a place in order to allow someone who's trying to help improve people's psychological and also social and emotional life through some form of artwork for their own creativity. And the most basic principle it holds is process over product, it puts emphasis more upon doing something rather than making anything look beautiful. Art Therapies: painting, sculpting, collage, listening & playing & making, dancing & movement & improvisation, drama. And these ones, they don't use them all together but if you have an idea about what kind of intervention you want to do with your kid. Visual art therapy: externalizing inner pictures and symbols; Music Therapy: going more right away toward emotional spots; Drama: a frame for role-play and societal scene practice. Put different kinds together so as to fit in with the various perceptive traits and expression choices of those youngsters on the autistic spectrum.

2.2 Autism's Kids' Perceptual Artistic Traits

Children who suffer from an autism in terms of art perceptions. A majority of them can show relatively intact, maybe even greater, visual-processing powers than non-autistic kids, and these same people could also be pretty sensitive to tiny details or picture patterns as well as the slightest distinctions when it comes down time telling what hues there might actually be out there in the wide world – kind of a neat little neuropsych basis behind why some visual-sensory arts therapies are around right now but I do think they're also capable though sometimes they'll only focus in small areas instead so you know just one small thing rather than really getting lost into this entire picture here. The sound part has got certain kids who are off-key regarding their likes or aversion towards particular tones or sounds; sounds are like the way music moves people emotionally for them. Concerning tactile and kinesthetic senses, a few kids feel things differently and are sensitive about what they touch which gives a way in through things like making clay figures or pottery. Understand and respect these perceptual characteristics if we want our art therapy activities to work and not cause too much excitement for our kiddos, thus preventing them from avoiding our activity due to being overwhelmed.

2.3 The Way for Us to Heal: From an Aesthetic Point of View

Aesthetic education is integrated into art therapy means moving from “fixing what’s wrong” to “cultivating aesthetic appreciation and life sensibility.” Healing from the point of view of aesthetic education has three ways. The first one is emotional catharsis path: using the aesthetics elements such as rhythm, color and melody in artistic activities to help the children with autism adjust their arousal level, release the suppressed emotion and get a feeling of order and safety. The second is the self-building way: Through the process of creating and appreciating, children gradually confirm their own expression; the formation of aesthetic judgment helps integrate self-awareness. Thirdly, there is the social connection path: Shared aesthetic experiences form a nonverbal space for empathy, and shared attention and emotional reactions among adults and children around artworks can be transferred to everyday social situations. From the viewpoint of aesthetic education, it raises the therapeutic objective from merely improving behavior to fostering the development of life.

3 Interventions Model and Design Logic

3.1 Design Principles of Multimodal Arts Activities

Multimodal art activities combine 2 or more art forms, trying to make use of each form’s strengths together. Design follows three rules. The first one is the sensory adaptation principle which means choosing suitable art media according to the person’s sensitivity and preference such as reducing high volume sounds and increasing visual and touch activities for people who have sensitive hearing. Second, the principle of increasing difficulty, starting with simple actions in one sense at a time (such as scribbling, tapping an instrument), and then progressing to tasks that require integrating information from multiple senses (such as painting to music, doing several things at once during a play). And third, the principle of cyclical reinforcement: arranging different kinds of expression within the same topic, for example, first paint to express your feelings, then react to the painting’s emotions through music, and finally interpret it with your body movements, forming a web of experiences with many encoding and expression layers.

3.2 Paths for Combining Structures and Freer Expression

Autism kids need a routine for reducing anxiety plus some room for creating freely. Structure in a nutshell is making boundaries, it sets boundaries for what we are going to do by having fixed starting and ending moments, certain materials and places, steps of visuals to remind us. Free expression happens inside those borders: Kids pick their own colors, lines, rhythm, or how they move on their own within a subject area without grown-ups saying if it’s good or bad. A usual combination path would be something like “organized beginning—free invention—finished closure.” In introducing the activity using movement or picture clues and during the part where you let your kid go wild with all their ideas and when we have this together tidying it away along with a quick summary. It avoids chaos as far as total freedom goes, but also stifles creativity too much from too much control.

3.3 Aesthetic Education Goal and Therapeutic Goals to be Unifying

The usual type of art therapy can slip quite quickly into the “functionalist” hole if they consider the artistic work merely as an instrument to improve symptoms without paying attention to its inherent appreciation. To make the aesthetic educational goals align with the therapeutic goals, we have to use every intervention at both levels. At the behavior stage, treatment goal is to reduce stereotypic actions, add suitable social answers and heighten one’s emotional management abilities. At an aesthetic level there is also an aim of education by helping the child develop feelings about and liking forms of things such as color, rhythm, tales. What is important is to put two indicators during activity creation: for example, watching if the kid looks when playing (treatment) but also if she understands and feels what the other person says (aesthetics) in playtime, storytime etc. Two complement one another – feeling good makes you more willing to join in, and better skills for talking to others gives you chances for prettier feelings.

4 Implementing Strategies and Methods

4.1 Guidance Strategy for Visual Art Activities

In terms of visual arts, we could do some paintings, make collages, sculpt things out of clay... The guide strategy, first on setting up environment: just give a few materials but clearly separate ones so there won’t be too much choice and lead to over thinking, use darker table mat colors which helps with making your workspace stand out against others that aren’t part of your work (so no other visuals). When an action starts, what counts is showing, not lecturing: show what I paint in sync or show one step and then stop, waiting for them to copy or try it themselves. While in the creative phase, say “You used lots of blue” instead of “It’s very pretty”, this can decrease childrens fear of judgement. Stereotyped repetition happens, introduce some slight alterations, add a different hue to the already drawn line, don’t simply shut off. At the end, help kids put the work in place using their name tag, build a sense of ownership through storage, and make a completed feeling.

4.2 Organizing Methods for Music and Movement Activities

Music and movement activities use the natural links between rhythm, tune, and body movement so these types of activities could work well for changing how lively kids who have autism feel. Key Org Method create pairing b/w "Music/

Behavior". Stage One begins choosing clearly structured musics with stable tempos like percussion from 60 – 80 BPM, and matched up with specific bodily actions of patting one's knee, clapping their hands, and swaying back and forth – which forms a link via repetitive exposure. Establish the child's anticipations and gradually bring in "stop – go" games to practice auditory attention and motor self – control. Over-excitables kids should listen to soft stringed tunes and deep breaths; less active kids should do loud rhythmic music accompanied by big jumps. Each music activity part will need about 3-5 minutes, also make it easy for the children to expect the end time using visual time bars.

4.3 Interaction Techniques for Drama and Role-Playing

Drama and role play provide a safe low-risk socialization practice ground for the Aspies. First, it comes to the interactions: start off your interactions by having some animals, so you know there are going to be less complex social expectations, so those social roles might be easier for our kid to figure out on their own than trying someone else right away. The teacher first performs the role model through exaggerated body language and simple language, and then asks the child to take turns. And the second one is making scenarios happen, like I do this, then you would follow me on these steps of three to four visuals at least, then we will order them into order with the card pictures, and let him go along the picture card's commands one by one. Then unexpected behaviors were handled by the instructor incorporating a behavior (e.g. avoid, repeat, etc.) into a story line, e.g., "the bunny kept spinning because she was looking for a carrot". If no break occurred because of continuous movement. After every drama activity, take photos and replay videos to enable kids recall what they did successfully, reinforce positive experience.

5 Dimensions of Outcome Assessment

5.1 Emotional Expressions and Stability Changes

Assessment is made towards two ways in regards to the evaluation as the evaluation is regarding if there's an enhancement or the amount has been reduced, both on improvement to the ability that was able to recognize and to be able to express the same, but also with decreasing the level and the extent of how much one is experiencing their ups and downs as far as the feeling is concerned. Assessment can employ emotion faces to see if kids know how happy, mad, sad, or scared people are, as well as what embarrassment, pride, and envy look like when told a little story involving emotions. Art activity context analysis: Spontaneous usage of art media by children to express their emotions by means of video code, such as color, lines etc in painting. Stability: Number of emotional eruptions, amount of time, and level of help required to calm down. Typical improvement trajectory shows as follows: goes from indiscriminate crying/tantrum to point at specific stimulus to indicate displeasure; emotional episode duration decreases from more than 20 mins to less than 5 mins; progresses from needing physical restraint to calming with just words.

5.2 Indicators to Measure Improvement in Social Communication Behaviors

To the social communication behaviours assessment contains verbal levels and also non- verbal ones. The nonverbal portion is looking at, watching eyes, imitating and referring socially. In groups art events note down how many times the kid checks out another kid's project, how quick they answer to when a grownup points them around, if you could duplicate someone else's act. Verbal function evaluation includes requesting and declining; making comments and talking with people. Indicators such as how many communications were initiated every 30 minute activity session, responding to others' initiation requests and understanding what one communicates by choosing the right words or alternative methods. Assessment tools may use standardized scale (Social Responsiveness Scale, SRS), or ecological observation (coded analysis of the video recordings). Worth noting improvements start to appear in known arts context but have to be spread across everyday settings in order to be verified.

5.3 Observation of Aesthetic Experience and Interest Expansion

Aesthetic experiences and interest extensions. These become the new evaluations under the aspect of aesthetic education. Observation indicators for aesthetical experience: The child's facial expressions that show enjoyment during art material play time, how long they focus on an artwork or listen to music, actions that express approval of what was created by themselves (such as keeping looking back at their creation over and over again, showing them off). More profoundly speaking, do the children have any aesthetic preference such as always picking the one amongst two color themes to stick to? Is the child continuously demanding the same song? Concerning interest expansion evaluation we have the stereotype interest alteration, diverse ones appear. In terms of normal changes: It is expanding from just wanting to make spinning wheel into being willing to draw circular shapes. Changing repeating object alignment activities into organizing and collaging various materials. Record with using of interest mapping, recording the distribution activity type in a single month child chooses by his/her self the observation trends in diffusion going from single activity to multi.

6 Practical Pathways and Recommendations

6.1 Collaborative Implementation Framework for Families and Institutions

Families and institutions need to collaborate in order for the results from art therapy treatment to continue and also be spread. It has three parts which I will refer to as 1st. Module: The goal sync module: each institution creates one art

therapy topic every 4 weeks (e.g., My Emotional Color), synchronize particular goals (e.g., Use Red To Show Anger) with moms/pops using words and images, moms/pops run small mini art activities at home around these goals for about 10-15 mins, and return key vidclips to the institutions. Second is the material sharing module; the institution gives out a portable art kit to the family containing safe paints and simple tools along with some emotion cards so they can make sure that all their materials used for making art at school and at home are either the same or very similar materials, this makes it less difficult for a child when switching between places. Third is the joint review module; monthly meetups of mommies with teachery types where we go over the kid's work and videos both in environments, finger consistency and side differences, and offer. It stresses on giving parent power rather than making them burden and plans of "it should be completed within 5 minutes", "it's easy to find materials" and "easy cleaning up".

6.2 Integration Resources and Build the Space Environment

Resources integration refers to the systematic distribution of humans, materials and society. Human resources have been set up around one art therapist, with special education teachers and parent assistants helping out. Each art therapist should be in charge of no more than 4 children directly. With respect to the material resources we must insist on the principle that we will have less money but also we want to do things very creative and we are talking about the fact that it is best to prefer the use of natural materials like leaves, earth, small pebbles, water, waste items such as cardboard boxes or bottle tops but mainly it's our hands where we have to create those simple tools so that we don't require anything more expensive as for professional art. Space creation is about safety - explorable - order. There are three parts to every art therapy area - it gets broken down into this 3 parts: Calm Zone: Soft ground, hides away tent, low stimulus (emotional). Creation Zone: Wipe tables, proper easels, hanging up lines to mount things upon the wall (main area of action). Transition Area: Visual Schedule boards with timers, personal storage for transitioning to next session. Walls have neutral base colours showing just some children's work which was created recently so there isn't too much decoration causing eye strain.

6.3 Aesthetic Education Competency Training for Teachers and Therapists

Art therapy has to happen because the teacher and therapist have aesthetics education competences. There are 3 levels for training system. First is Aesthetic Perceptual Training, through art appreciation classes we will show how you can shift away from "I think it's ugly/but" to actually describing its parts and learning how to talk about something with all that juicy specific art language that isn't just like "it looks great" but things like "what's up in that thick paint job? And what makes these tones feel warm or cold, or does that whole thing about how quickly everything moves together feel like a steady drum roll?". Secondly enhance activity design ability: Train teachers to create their own aesthetic education-focused art activities from given purposes, emphasizing on translating an abstract objective such as "develop patience" to particular aesthetic actions like using finger paintings experiencing the transformation from intense pressure into light strokes. Lastly, observations and responses: through video clips of cases, make teachers identify aesthetic points in kids' artistic actions, whether they're focusing intently on the interplay of light and shadows or trying out different shades, then help them learn not to cut in on these moments by remaining neutral and saying, "Look, the light passing through that red paper," so as to encourage more of these fleeting beauties.

7 Conclusion

Art therapy creates another way for interventions on kids on the autistic spectrum who do not speak using language. By integrating an aesthetics education standpoint, we elevate it so that no longer is it being thought of as something which we have to modify behaviors from or simply an educational tool but rather an environment through which they develop their own sense of self in life. Construct a system frame including theory, models, designs, implementation, assessing and pathway. The main conclusion is respect for sensory of kid with autism, keep the right amount and freedom mix of it, aiming for unification of therapy and educating aesthetics as a triad of good practice. Family and Institution, integration of low-cost resources, and strengthening the capabilities of teachers in aesthetic education serve as defenses for sustainable execution. Future work might want to know more about things like how much different kinds of art change us and make special math formulas to match everyone perfectly, also very long ways that our sense of what's nice might go, so art therapy could finally get to be something where we see the same kid, the one with autism, start having a better life full of all sorts of different things that are good for them.

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