

The Young Athletes Curriculum: Impact on Children with Disabilities in Kenya

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Abstract

Research consistently demonstrates that children with developmental disabilities exhibit motor skill deficits, but motor skill interventions can positively affect motor abilities and other areas of development. These findings have particular relevance for children with disabilities in developing countries, where there is limited access to early intervention and education. In these settings, motor skill interventions may provide a means to address delays in development and positively affect perceptions of family and community members about their capacity to learn. To that end, this study examined the adaptability, feasibility, and effectiveness of implementing a motor skills intervention, the Special Olympics' Young Athletes Curriculum (YA), in Kenya. Eighteen preschool-age children with intellectual and developmental disabilities participated in the YA intervention, which consisted of 187 motor activities delivered in 24 lessons across 8 weeks. The findings indicate that the YA intervention is adaptable and can be feasibly implemented with high fidelity. In addition, significant motor gains were demonstrated on the pre and posttest of the Test of Motor Development and a positive and multi-level impact on inclusion of children with disabilities was found.

Keywords: Motor skills; preschool children with disabilities

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