

# Relationship Between Play & Self-Esteem for Children With Disabilities

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One of the most influential occupations, or activities, that children engage in is play. Children with disabilities face unique experiences in play and have been reported to have varying levels of self-esteem as compared to their typically developing peers. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between play and self-esteem for children with disabilities. This exploratory research study used a one-time concurrent mixed method cross-sectional survey design collecting quantitative and qualitative data. A survey was created using adapted questions and scales from established assessments regarding self-esteem and play (e.g. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scales and PEM-CY). Of the 24 responses, the average age of children was 9.63 years old (SD= 2.12). The study has identified that the younger the child is, the higher their self-esteem ( $B=-1.31$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and that children with ADHD have higher self-esteem than other diagnoses ( $B=1.25$ ,  $p=.03$ ). This research study showed significant relationships between age and diagnosis on self-esteem, and highlighted potential factors that could impact self-esteem and play for children with disabilities. This study adds to the limited literature of the relationship between play and self-esteem for this population, emphasizes the need for more research, and has the potential to guide care and treatment for those who work with children with disabilities, in particularly occupational therapy (OT) practitioners.

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