

**Full source reference:**

Cahill, S. M., Egan, B. E., & Seber, J. (2020). Activity-and occupation-based interventions to support mental health, positive behavior, and social participation for children and youth: A systematic review. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(2), 7402180020p1-7402180020p28.

**Free access link:**

N/A

**Article Overview:**

- This article identifies evidence for occupational therapy interventions for children and youth at risk of mental health concerns.
- This review focuses on mental health outcomes, positive behaviours and participation
- 62 articles were included in this review and were grouped on the basis of the type of intervention (outdoor camps, video and computer games, productive occupations and life skills, meditation, animal-assisted interventions, creative arts, play, sport and yoga).
- There is only **strong evidence for three of these interventions** directly addressing mental health outcomes: (1) yoga, (2) sports interventions and (3) productive occupations and life skills training

**Key take home messages:**

1. *Mental health outcomes:*
  - **Moderate-strength** evidence for yoga;
  - **Moderate strength** evidence for productive occupations and life skills training (life skills modules, vocational skills groups, graded occupational engagement);
  - **Low strength evidence** for use of sport interventions (including martial arts, boxing, basketball).
2. *Positive behaviour outcomes (e.g., decrease in antisocial behaviours):*
  - **Moderate strength evidence** for yoga
  - **Moderate strength evidence** for sports intervention
  - **Low strength evidence** for productive occupations and life skills training (e.g., focusing on organisational skills).
3. *Social participation outcomes (e.g., reduction of social/communication deficits, improved cooperativeness):*
  - **Strong evidence** for sports intervention
  - **Low strength evidence** for yoga
  - **Low strength evidence** for productive occupations and life skills interventions.
4. **Yoga** addressed all three outcomes with moderate strength of evidence; yoga and sports interventions stronger evidence than productive and life skills training interventions (low to moderate evidence). → Suggesting importance of engagement in physical activities in mental health outcomes.
5. Evidence for the use of animal-assisted interventions, meditation, video and computer games, and productive occupations was of **low strength of evidence**.