

Full source reference:

Wilkes-Gillan, S., Bundy, A., Cordier, R., Lincoln, M., & Chen, Y. W. (2016). A randomised controlled trial of a play-based intervention to improve the social play skills of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). *PloS one*, 11(8), e0160558.

Free access link:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4987013/pdf/pone.0160558.pdf>

Article Overview:

- This is a randomised controlled trial examining the effectiveness of a play-based intervention in improving the social play skills of children with ADHD in peer-to-peer interactions.
- Sample: 29 children with ADHD aged 5 to 11
- Participants were recruited through flyers distributed in 3 paediatric services in Sydney, Australia. The intervention involved: six clinic play-sessions, weekly home-modules and a one-month home follow up.

Key take home messages:

1. The play-based intervention was effective in improving social play skills for children with ADHD aged 5 to 11 years in peer-to-peer interactions in the clinic and home environment.
2. Change in social play skills (measured by the Test of Playfulness) in the intervention group was significantly greater than in the control group post intervention
3. Control group received the intervention 10 weeks after. After all children had completed the intervention, results showed that scores on the Test of Playfulness scale improved significantly in both cohorts.
4. Lower baseline scores predicted greater change → suggesting that the intervention might particularly benefit children with severe social skills deficits.
5. Key components of the intervention which arguably affected success:
 - Include typically-developing playmates
 - Using video-modelling with support from the therapist prior social play interactions
 - The therapist and playmate supporting problem-solving when difficulties unfolded during spontaneous child-led/initiated play interactions
 - The therapist ensuring children were engaged in activities;
 - The child's own disposition or tendency to play
 - Level of time commitment from parent, with parents playing a key role in supporting play skill generalisation in the home environment to maintain skills.