

The refugee crisis and Georgia: How does occupational therapy fit in?

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What Is a Refugee?

- Refugee is a technical term used by the United Nations
- Defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention as a person who has

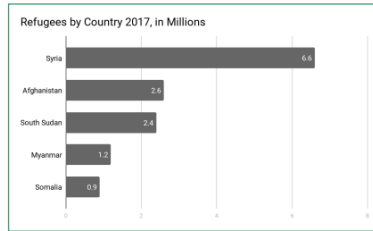
“well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion

is outside the country of his nationality

and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

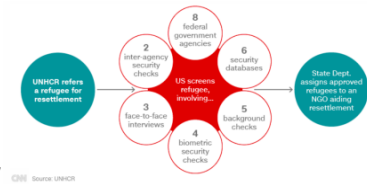
International Perspective on Refugee Crisis

- In 2017, global numbers of displaced individuals reached 68 million
 - 25.4 million internationally displaced and recognized as refugees
 - Over half of these are under age 18
- Crisis hotspots - 68% of the world's refugees come from five countries



Refugees and the US

- In 2018, the US will have admitted 30,000 refugees by FY end in September
- In 2016, the US admitted 85,000
- The process of entering the US takes 18-24 months
- Section 6(a) of Executive Order 13780 from April 2017 increases security screening measures



Refugees and Georgia

- Georgia is in top 10 resettlement states in the US - 3.7% of total in 2017
- Clarkston, GA (DeKalb County) has become home to over 40,000 refugees in the past 25 years
- Clarkston welcomes approx. 1,500 refugees a year
- Friends of Refugees a non-profit organization based in Clarkston, GA
 - Mission: “to empower refugees through opportunities that provide for their well-being, education and employment.”
 - Core values: relationship, empowerment, and stewardship
 - In 2015, served over 4,000 people through 7 different programs

Friends of Refugees Programs



- Cafe Clarkston and CareerHub
- Jolly Avenue Community Garden
- Jolly Avenue Development Center (coming soon!)
- StartMe: Business Accelerator (partner program)
- Embrace - Refugee Birth Support
- Youth Programs - academic support, social development, work-readiness skills
- Family Literacy Program - Mommy and Me
 - Provides English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes to refugee mothers and their children aged 0-5 years old through a parent-child joint learning approach
 - Currently serving over 200 women who speak over 20 languages through biweekly classes
 - Pilot site for Eat, Move, Talk! Initiative for the Georgia Department of Public Health

Occupational Profile of a Refugee

- Occupational deprivation
 - Women in refugee camps report difficulty re-engaging with meaningful occupations and struggling with the "being" and "becoming" dimensions of occupations
 - Compared life in camps to life in prisons
 - New occupations were chosen to be prepared for the future
 - Overt discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or SES
- Trauma
 - Death of loved one
 - High rates of generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression
- New surroundings
 - Occupations are adapted in three stages
 - Maintaining familiar occupations in familiar environments
 - Exploring new skills within adjusted ways of doing
 - Undertaking challenging roles within the new environment
 - Connection to needed services for refugees with disabilities

How can occupational therapy address these needs?

Solutions must be:

- Creative
- Evidence-based
- Community-based

Physical Activity for Life Skills (PALS):
Program development and implementation

Introduction

- Partnered with FoR Mommy and Me program
- Refugee families in Clarkston live primarily in apartments
- Children's physical activity levels are low



**Exercise +
Childhood =
Play**

Needs Assessment Findings

- Two sources of data
 - Secondary data from Georgia Department of Public Health:
 - Showed local geographic trends of inactivity and mortality risks related to inactivity
 - Key informant interviews:
 - Little to no external physical activity was known of for the children aside from time spent at the program.
 - Active time spent at the program (which is attended twice per week) was reported as well beneath the daily physical activity recommendations of 120-180 active minutes per day

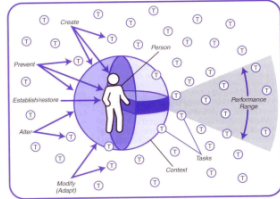
Therefore, structured physical activity time should be added into Mommy and Me curriculum

Theory: Ecology of Human Performance Model (EHP)

Occupational Performance: tasks available within context that support the person

Person: experiences and abilities (sensorimotor, cognitive and psychosocial)

Context: physical, temporal, social, and cultural environments



EHP Mode applied to PALS Program

- Person: children (1 mos- 5 yrs) enrolled in the family literacy program at Friends of Refugees
- Abilities: estimated by age and what developmental milestones they should be achieving
- Context: classroom, gym, or outside play area
- Therapeutic interventions
 - Establish/restore: new level of physical activity
 - Create: opportunities for movement

Four program principles

1. Importance of physical activity
2. Importance of play
3. Importance of tummy time
4. Activities should be related to larger themes of Mommy and Me program

Importance of Physical Activity

- Prevents childhood obesity - 80% of cases will lead to adult obesity
- Reduces the risk of hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and diabetes
- Improves psychosocial well-being: gain self-confidence and improves self-esteem



Importance of Play

- Play is essential occupation for children from birth till their adolescence.
- Benefits of play
 - Gross and fine motor skills
 - Emotional regulation
 - Language and communication skills
 - Social interaction
- Types of play in PALS program
 - Themed play
 - Pretending/Role play
 - Sensorimotor
 - Social play

Importance of Tummy Time

- Overall development
- Improves:
 - Child's motor skills
 - Strengthens neck and shoulder muscles
 - Prevents positional plagiocephaly
 - Language development
- Sensorimotor play and exploration
 - Toys spread out on a blanket
 - Encourage development of functional reach patterns



Activities should be related to themes

- Mommy and Me program has monthly themes for ESOL classes
- Parent-child model means that child and parent learn the same material to carry over conversations at home
- Program themes
 - Zoo
 - Community helpers
 - Friends and family
 - Farm

Program Overview

- Recruitment: All children in Mommy and Me program will be included in the program
- Intervention strategies: use the occupation of play and evidence-based techniques to tackle known client and contextual factors which interfere with occupational performance
- Program goals:
 - The children will engage in 16 weeks of structured physical activities which require gross motor coordination.
 - The teachers will be able to articulate the importance of physical activity and play as an occupation in relation to childhood development.
 - The children will be able to use English words related to the themes correctly to demonstrate language acquisition.

Lesson Plan Overview

Two types of lesson plans were developed in this program:

1. Infants - tummy time recommendations including themes covered in literacy classes during the semester
2. Toddlers and Preschoolers - activity suggestions which require ability to walk based on themes covered in literacy classes during the semester

Infants

Tummy Time Recommendation



- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies spend a cumulative of 40-60 minutes prone each day
- Our tummy time recommendation is at least 15 minutes during their time at Friends of Refugees
- Blankets should be placed under the infants
- Toys related to theme should be spread out within the infant's reach to encourage development of functional reach
- Board books related to the theme can also be read to the infant to develop language

Zoo Theme

Overview

- During the Zoo theme, lesson plans center around the names of zoo animals which are used with yoga poses.
- Yoga and childhood development
 - Research has found yoga to be a beneficial form of exercise for children and improves psychological health (Galantino, Galbavy, & Quinn, 2008; Weaver & Darragh, 2015)
 - If a child is unable to do a pose, teachers model it for them because they are learning through watching via mirror neurons (Lago, Cheeran, Koch, Hortobágyi, & Fernández-Del-Olmo, 2014).

Weekly Plans



- Flow of Yoga Sessions
- Warm Up
 - Breathing
 - Poses (Kriya)

Week	Yoga Poses
Week 1	Bear, Cobra, Lizard, & Gorilla
Week 2	Crocodile, Dolphin, Zebra, & Elephant
Week 3	Lion, Frog, Giraffe, & Eagle
Week 4	Turtle, Camel, Flamingo, & Monkey

Community Helpers Theme

Overview

- Children will engage in pretend role play activities
- They will be assigned roles such as doctors, construction workers, farmers, and firefighters
- Pretend role play
 - Helps children with cognitive development, social and language skills and translates to later academic achievement (Doris et al., 2002)
 - Help children to understand roles in the community

Community Helpers Weekly Activities

- Week 1 – Firefighting team
 - Teams work together to put out pretend fires by working through an obstacle course
- Week 2 – Construction repair team
 - Teams work together to carry needed items through an obstacle course to repair imaginary damage done to buildings during a hurricane
- Week 3 – EMS team rescue
 - Teams of four work through a series of games and obstacle courses to retrieve and rescue an imaginary patient
- Week 4 – Farming teams
 - Children are split into two teams to alternately sow and reap crops by jumping through obstacle courses with bean bags



Friends and Family Theme

Overview

- During the friends and family theme, classic games center around social play and motor and sensory development
- Games that they might experience in traditional classroom
- Social play and childhood development:
 - Large piece of social development in the preschool years
 - Leads to pretend play and pragmatic play
 - Through interacting with peers, students expand their cognitive and social abilities
 - Help develop social competence and emotional expression (Reifei & Frost, 2010)
 - Social class can have an effect on the level of social play

Friends and Family Weekly Activities

- Week 1 – Ring around the Rosie
- Week 2 – Follow the leader
- Week 3 – Red light, green light
- Week 4 – Simon says



Farm Theme

Overview

- Children will engage in activities related to the farm theme
- Social play used to develop social skills (Frost et al., 2010)
 - Cognitive and social abilities through interacting with peers
 - Ability for children to express their emotions and feelings



Farm Weekly Activities

- Week 1 – Chicken dance
- Week 2 – Musical chairs
 - Themed music – “Old MacDonald” or “Flight of the Bumblebee” by Rimsky-Korsakov
- Week 3 – Cat and mouse
- Week 4 – Farm animal charades



Program Evaluation

- Completed at midpoint and completion of the program
- Informal observation and conversations
 - During bi-weekly staff meetings
- Teacher reports
 - Survey
 - Questions related to
 - Program’s implementation
 - Teachers’ perception of the program’s impact
 - Estimated unexpected costs

