**ABSTRACTIONS**

The abstracts below are taken from journals, the contents page of which are included in this month's Information Service. These abstracts are provided as a response from Information Service members who have asked us to provide more information about the articles contained in our contents' page.

**Participation in intellectual disability research: a review of 20 years of studies**

**Background** Researchers have noted difficulties in attracting adequate numbers of participants with intellectual disabilities (ID) to their studies.

**Methods** This study was a review of participation by adults with ID in research conducted in South Eastern Ontario over a 20-year period (1987–2006). Original research studies were identified by local investigators and then reviewed for inclusion and exclusion criteria. The report of each study was then reviewed by three reviewers and key information was extracted. The extent of study participation was calculated using three methods and compared along with key design characteristics.

**Results** Nine studies met all inclusion/exclusion criteria and provided sufficient data to calculate participation. Among the studies there was a variety of purposes, research designs and recruitment strategies. Using the participant/approached calculation, participation varied between 41.8% and 100%. Higher participation was observed in studies where investigators had direct access to participants, the data collection was non-invasive and consent was required from substitute decision-makers only. There was no clear trend of increasing or decreasing participation over time.

**Conclusions** Researchers seeking the participation of adults with ID in their studies must incorporate factors influencing participation into study designs to ensure robust results and effective use of research resources.

**Understanding early communication signals in autism: a study of the perception of infants' cry**

**Background** Previous studies have highlighted that episodes of crying of children with autistic disorder (AD) were perceived as inexplicable from their parents who could not identify causative factors. These results supported the view of AD as related to a problem of expressing and sharing emotions. Moreover, no evidence has been presented on which characteristics of a cry episode influence the adult perception. Aim of our research is to investigate how acoustical features of crying episodes modulate their perception of infants with ASD compared with infants with typical development (TD) and infants with developmental delay (DD).

**Methods** Two studies were employed. In study 1, we artificially modified structural parameters (fundamental frequency, duration of the pauses, waveform modulation) of a cry episode, and then 50 adults (parents and non-parents) were asked to judge the level of distress elicited. In study 2, acoustic analysis was applied to episodes of crying selected from retrospective home videos of 42 children with AD, TD and DD at 18 months.

**Results** The results showed that (1) differences in the fundamental frequency and in other structural parameters of the cry lead parents and non-parents to perceive an episode of crying as more aversive and (2) at 18 months of age, AD episodes of crying have higher fundamental frequency (f0).
Conclusion Our findings offer support for the hypothesis that acoustic characteristics of episodes of crying of children with autism, especially higher fundamental frequencies, may account for mental states of uneasiness in the listener.

Training Staff to Measure the Engagement of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Childcare Centres
International Journal of Disability, Development and Education Volume 57 Number 1 March 2010

Practitioner use of the revised Individual Child Engagement Record - Revised (ICER-R) for observing children with disabilities in inclusive childcare is examined. Training in the use of the ICER-R, which includes both a momentary time sampling observation system and rating scales, was provided across two training phases with five to seven participants. Four of the five participants who completed both phases of the training achieved greater than 80% inter-observer agreement on the observation measure within the allocated time, and were able to maintain this level of agreement over subsequent observation sessions. There was consistency in ratings across observers and positive, statistically significant correlations were found for data gathered using momentary time sampling and data from rating scales. The practical value of the ICER-R was supported by feedback provided through evaluation questionnaires completed by participants. Training childcare practitioners to systematically observe children with disabilities in inclusive childcare has the potential to benefit both children and staff.

Social Participation of Students with Special Needs in Regular Primary Education in the Netherlands
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This study addresses the social participation of young students (Grades One to Three) with special needs in regular Dutch primary schools. More specifically, the focus lies on four key themes related to social participation: friendships/relationships, contacts/interactions, students’ social self-perception, and acceptance by classmates. The outcomes of the study revealed that the majority of students with special needs have a satisfactory degree of social participation. However, compared with students without special needs, a relatively large portion of the students with special needs experience difficulties in their social participation. In general, students with special needs have a significantly lower number of friends and are members of a cohesive subgroup less often than their typical peers. In addition, students with special needs have fewer interactions with classmates, have more interactions with the teacher, and are less accepted than students without special needs. The social self-perception of both groups of students does not differ. A comparison between students with different categories of disability regarding the four themes of social participation revealed no significant differences.

A masculine perspective of gendered topics in the research literature on males and females with intellectual disability

Background: A focus on male social pathologies may have evolved within parts of the intellectual disability research literature. This article explores this notion and makes some connections between mainstream gender theory about hegemonic masculinity and the current gendered discourse in intellectual disability research.

Method: We conducted a thematic analysis of all journal article titles from four prominent intellectual disability journals where “man,” “woman,” “women,” “male,” “girl,” and “boy” were mentioned in the title.

Results: Thematic differences were identified between articles that focused on males or females, with less research attention on male health compared with female health. A strong focus was evident on problematised male sexual behaviour.
**Conclusions:** There is a distinct difference evident between articles that problematise males and articles for females encouraging health promotion that suggests a disparate focus on male social pathologies. A deeper contextual analysis of unique sex differences in research is proposed.

**Social Integration in Employment Settings: Application of Intergroup Contact Theory**  
*Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Volume 48 Number 1: 31-51 February 2010*

This study used a survey of 106 employment specialists to test the ability of intergroup contact theory to explain social integration outcomes of employees with disabilities. Contact theory suggests that coworkers are more accepting of employees with disabilities if they have sufficient opportunities to interact with them, equal status and interdependent working relationships, and supervisors who support equality and acceptance. The contact model and an expanded model that includes workplace culture significantly predicted not only coworker attitudes toward employees with disabilities but also the employees’ level of social participation and feelings of social support. In addition, outcome dependency moderated the relation between the vocational competence of employees with disabilities and coworker attitudes toward them. Study findings have practical implications for facilitating social relationships in the supported workplace.