

**Occupational Therapy Incorporating Animals for Children with Autism: A Pilot Investigation.** Sams, M. J., Fortney, E. V., Willenbring, S. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 60(3) 2006 May/Jun:268-74.

**Abstract:** This investigation compared language use and social interaction in children with autism receiving two forms of occupational therapy: occupational therapy using standard techniques, and occupational therapy incorporating animals. Twenty-two children between the ages of 7 and 13 received both forms of therapy in a school-based occupational therapy program for children with autism. Results suggest that the children demonstrated significantly greater use of language and significantly greater social interaction in sessions incorporating animals when compared to sessions using exclusively standard occupational therapy techniques. Findings are discussed in the context of recent research that has highlighted the importance of enhancing the motivation of children with autism to engage actively in therapeutic and learning processes.