

Submission on the Inclusion of Activity-Based Group Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy in the NDIS In List

Introduction:

Succeed Healthcare Solutions Pty Ltd is a multi-award-winning provider of innovative, activity-based occupational therapy and physiotherapy groups, specifically designed for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our services are delivered in real-world environments beyond traditional clinic settings and have demonstrated significant improvements in client outcomes, including social skills, functional independence, and emotional regulation. With the proposed changes in the NDIS support list, it is crucial to present detailed evidence of these improvements and advocate for the inclusion of these essential group services in the NDIS In List.

Evidence-Based Practice and Outcome Measurements:

Our group services are grounded in evidence-based practice, emphasising the therapeutic use of meaningful activities, such as play and social interaction, to address core deficits in children with ASD.

We consistently measure client progress through pre-, during, and post-intervention assessments using a variety of validated tools. These assessments provide concrete data on the effectiveness of our interventions, ensuring that our services not only meet but exceed client expectations.

Social Interaction:

Outcomes: The Secret Agent Society (SAS) program, a core component of our social skills training, demonstrated a 69.2% improvement in managing anxiety strategies and a 54.5% improvement in anger management strategies. Additionally, the Spence Social Skills Questionnaire revealed a 100% improvement, with 66% of children improving their scores within the average range and 33% progressing from the clinical to the average range (see Appendix).

Client Satisfaction: Client surveys indicated a 100% satisfaction rate, with both participants and their carers expressing strong approval of the program's impact on social skills and emotional well-being (see Appendix).

Functional Independence:

Outcomes: The MEYA scores, which track functional outcomes across 14 criteria (adapted by Succeed), showed that 49.3% of scores improved post-intervention, 31.8% remained stable, and only 18.9% deteriorated. These significant improvements were especially noted in areas prioritised by parents and carers for therapy, confirming the effectiveness of our group intervention strategies (see Appendix). Deteriorated scores were often linked to external factors like medication changes or major life events such as changing schools. Scores that remained stable were typically associated with areas not yet addressed in therapy.

Client Satisfaction: By involving parents in goal setting and program planning, we achieved a 100% client satisfaction rate, with many parents reporting marked improvements in their children's daily living activities and overall independence (see Appendix).

Emotional Regulation:

Outcomes: The Emotion Regulation and Social Skills Questionnaire, completed by both parents and teachers, reported a 100% improvement. This finding highlights the effectiveness of our group programs in helping children develop better emotional regulation strategies, leading to fewer behavioural incidents and greater overall emotional resilience (see Appendix).

Client Satisfaction: Parents frequently observed noticeable changes in their children's ability to manage emotions, attributing these improvements to the structured, play-based interventions provided in our group programs (see Appendix).

Alignment with NDIS Goals:

The NDIS is dedicated to enhancing participant independence, community engagement, and overall well-being. Our activity-based group therapy model aligns perfectly with these goals, emphasising meaningful occupations such as play and social interaction that foster long-term, sustainable improvements in participants' lives. By focusing on these areas, we ensure that the skills developed during therapy sessions are easily transferable to daily life, leading to continued success outside of therapy.

Client Satisfaction and Feedback:

The success of our group programs is further evidenced by the high level of client satisfaction reported in our surveys:

Overall Satisfaction: Surveys from 2022 and 2023 revealed that 82% of clients strongly agreed they were satisfied with the quality of services provided, and 100% agreed overall. Additionally, 100% of participants in the SAS program reported enjoying the sessions (see Appendix).

Goal Achievement: 100% of surveyed parents agreed that the services helped their children achieve their goals, with significant improvements noted in areas such as school performance and social interaction (see Appendix).

Communication and Involvement: Parents and carers reported a high level of involvement in planning and decision-making, with 82% strongly agreeing that they felt respected and that their input was valued, and 100% agreeing overall (see Appendix).

Furthermore, our group services have been recognised with several awards, including the Moreton Bay Business & Innovation Award for Accessibility & Inclusiveness Excellence (2022), the Outdoors Queensland Adventure Therapy Award (2022), and the Bx Business Xcellence Allied Health Award (2024). Our services have also been named as finalists in the Allied Health Awards (2024 – winners yet to be announced). These accolades highlight our commitment to providing accessible, inclusive, and effective therapy options.

Industry Recognition and Pioneering Models: Succeed Healthcare Solutions has been at the forefront of developing innovative therapy models that integrate traditional evidence-based practices with modern approaches. Our Integrated Therapy Model, launched in June 2023, uses a combination of data-driven insights and occupation-based interventions to enhance therapy outcomes (See Appendix). Additionally, our Building Blocks of Therapy framework, introduced in 2024, outlines a structured approach to therapy that focuses on long-term functional gains (See Appendix).

These models are not only cutting-edge but also highly effective, as demonstrated by the significant improvements in participant outcomes. The success of these models underscores the importance of maintaining activity-based group therapies as an integral part of the NDIS support framework.

Conclusion:

The data strongly supports the inclusion of activity-based group occupational therapy and physiotherapy services in the NDIS In List. These services yield significant improvements in social, functional, and emotional outcomes and align with the NDIS's broader goals of enhancing participant independence and community involvement. The high level of client satisfaction, coupled with measurable improvements in function and well-being, underscores the critical role these services play in the lives of children with ASD and their families.

Operational Considerations:

Succeed's groups are designed to foster a sense of belonging among participants, making them feel as though they are attending extracurricular hobbies rather than therapy sessions. This approach avoids any stigma or sense of deficiency associated with needing therapy and promotes a feeling of normalcy. The focus on making therapy fun also helps prevent therapy burnout. Research shows that engaging in enjoyable activities enhances learning by activating strong emotions. Additionally, the groups place a significant emphasis on educating parents, carers, and teachers to ensure that skills learned in sessions are generalised to everyday life, which is crucial for achieving lasting therapeutic change.

Our therapy team members benefit from a continuous learning trajectory due to the goal-focused nature of each group session and the opportunity to support participants collectively (ie therapists often deliver services to participants at the same time in the same venue). This collaborative environment fosters peer learning and team member retention, ensuring consistent, high-quality care.

Example Groups Include:**Structured Groups:**

Secret Agent Society: Recognised as the most effective program of its kind for 8-12-year-olds with social-emotional functioning issues.

UCLA's PEERS for Adolescents: One of the few evidence-based social skills programs for teens with autism.

Hands-On Therapy Groups:

Parkour Ninjas Club

Silks Sensations aerial silks style Club

Sparkling Hooves Equine Therapy Club

Rock & Bounce Trampoline Club

Eco-Adventures Outdoor Therapy Club

Pawsitive Connections Canine Assisted Therapy Club

Robotics League

Teen Walk/Jog/Gym Club

HEART Art Style Therapy Club

Therapy doesn't need to be boring to be effective. In fact, evidence-based practice is a combination of research, clinical wisdom and client preferences. If the participant is not motivated to attend therapy ('client preference'), there is no progress against NDIS goals as they are not attending therapy.

Given the substantial evidence of effectiveness, client satisfaction, and industry recognition, we strongly advocate for the inclusion of these therapies in the NDIS In List.

Summary of Key Points:

Significant Outcomes: Measurable improvements across social skills, functional independence, and emotional regulation, as demonstrated by detailed assessments and scores.

High Client Satisfaction: 100% satisfaction in key programs, with strong approval from both participants and their carers.

Alignment with NDIS Goals: Direct support for NDIS objectives, promoting independence and community participation.

Proven Effectiveness: Rigorous data collection and analysis validate the effectiveness of activity-based therapy.

The inclusion of activity-based therapy groups in the NDIS In List is essential for ensuring that participants receive the comprehensive, impactful support they need to thrive.

See our website for further information:

<https://succeedhealthcare.com.au/occupational-therapist-programs/>

Appendix:

