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## **Designing contextual playground skills camps for school students who are unhappy, anxious and angry**

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### **Background**

Teachers and parents report that role participation in the playground is critical to children's belonging and identity. Children experiencing social, learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties can find the playground an overwhelming, lonely and miserable experience. These children are unable to efficiently apply cognitive strategies, in particular planning and problem solving strategies (Wight & Chapparo, 2008), for child-structured games and peer interactions. This impacts on their capacity to select appropriate strategies for managing feelings and making decisions relative to active engagement in play and friendship.

### **Aim**

This paper describes the development over a 10 year time span of a contextual playground skills programme. The challenges and lessons learned from working with children who have explosive, unpredictable and isolating participatory behaviours will be outlined.

### **Method**

A skills based framework using an information processing approach has been developed to support children's learning for physical, social, conversational and contextual aspects of participation.

### **Findings**

Group intervention programmes can be specifically and individually targeted to address children's contextual needs. Key stakeholders report that children's strategy use is being generalised to home and school contexts. Children are more actively and appropriately engaging in role performance in the playground in ways which enable them to make friends and keep friends.

### **Conclusion**

Being responsive to programming needs in the area of social competence is challenging for therapists in regard to time, energy, knowledge and comfort. Lessons are being learned over time through trialing different models of service delivery and through dynamic partnerships with parents and teachers.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Therapists would value guidance in developing contextual interventions for children who experience difficulty with role participation in the playground in order to improve service delivery for intervention.

### **References**