



Pergamon

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

SCIENCE @ DIRECT®

Research in Developmental Disabilities  
24 (2003) 281–305

Research  
in  
Developmental  
Disabilities

# Involvement in Special Olympics and its relations to self-concept and actual competency in participants with developmental disabilities

Jonathan Weiss<sup>\*</sup>, Terry Diamond, Jenny Demark,  
Benedicte Lovald

*Department of Psychology, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ont., Canada M3J 1P3*

Received 4 November 2002; received in revised form 15 January 2003; accepted 12 February 2003

---

## Abstract

The current study examined the relations among components of a physical activity program, Special Olympics (SO), and the self-concepts (i.e., perceived physical competence, social acceptance, and general self-worth) and adaptive behaviors of individuals with developmental disabilities. This research can assist in the development of theoretical models of *how* physical activity programs can be implemented to effect psychological change. Participants consisted of a randomly selected group of 97 individuals with developmental disabilities, between 9 and 43 years of age, and their parents. Participants' self-concepts and adaptive behaviors were measured both by direct interview and parental report. Examined program components consisted of the length of time affiliated to the organization, number of competitions attended, of hours spent in training, of sports, and of medals obtained. Multiple regression analyses suggest relations between specific components of SO and participants' self-concepts and adaptive behaviors. These relations highlight the importance of competition and sport for individuals with developmental disabilities.

© 2003 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* social acceptance; self-concepts; disabilities

---

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-416-736-2100x20706; fax: +1-416-736-5814.

*E-mail address:* [jweiss1@yorku.ca](mailto:jweiss1@yorku.ca) (J. Weiss).

The importance of self-concept for psychological well-being has been known since the time of ancient Greek philosophy, when the Oracle at Delphi proclaimed to “know thyself” (Hattie, 1992), however, a relative dearth of attention has been paid to the self-concept of individuals with developmental disabilities (Evans, 1998). Self-concept is commonly viewed as the perception and evaluation of the self, and includes the beliefs, feelings, and intentions that a person holds in regard to self (Sherrill, 1993). It is not surprising that, when referring to self-concept, there are a number of terms that are used almost interchangeably, including self-esteem, self-worth, self-regard, and self-perception, which are all covered under this definition (Sherrill, 1993).

In general personality theory, self-concept is largely seen as a multidimensional construct of characteristics, competencies, attributes, and roles (Fox, 2000). The orthogenetic view of development (Werner, 1957) specifies that self-concept is global and undifferentiated early in development, becoming increasingly differentiated and hierarchically integrated with age. That is, while preschool age children hold a single, unstructured view of the self across salient areas of their lives, school age children demonstrate multiple, yet interrelated, perspectives of themselves that differ based on those relevant areas (Harter, 1983). This orthogenesis is thought to continue into adolescence, with still greater differentiation of self-aspects (Evans, 1994).

The majority of research has tended to view self-concept as a unitary, global construct, leading to an absence of measures designed to assess distinct aspects of the self (Evans, 1998). Research has shown that instruments that provide a global score can mask distinctions of the self that are relevant to children (Harter, 1985). One important alternative is the work by Harter (1982), who developed a self-report measure of self-concept that taps distinct aspects of the self that are important to children over 8 years of age. Four domains were identified: cognitive competence, physical competence, social acceptance, and general self-worth. Although reliable factors emerged for children over 8 years of age, analysis of a downward pictorial extension of the self-report measure revealed that children younger than 8 years fail to make similar distinctions (Harter & Pike, 1984).

In individuals with developmental disabilities, the development of self-concept may follow a similar sequence of orthogenesis, although its progression seems to be largely governed by developmental level. That is, individuals with mental retardation may show more global self-concepts than age-matched peers without delays (Dykens, Rosner, & Butterbaugh, 1998), and self-concept structures consistent more with their mental age equivalent (Evans, 1998; Fine & Caldwell, 1967; Loveland, 1987; Mans, Cicchetti, Sroufe, 1978). Similar to typically developing younger children, children aged 9–12 years with developmental disabilities (with IQs ranging from 55–85) fail to differentiate between their physical and academic domains and do not demonstrate the awareness of an independent sense of general self-worth (Silon & Harter, 1985). They are able, however, to differentiate between their sense of general self-competence and social acceptance. By adolescence, a more realistic self-concept appears to

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات