

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS, INDOOR IMPACT:

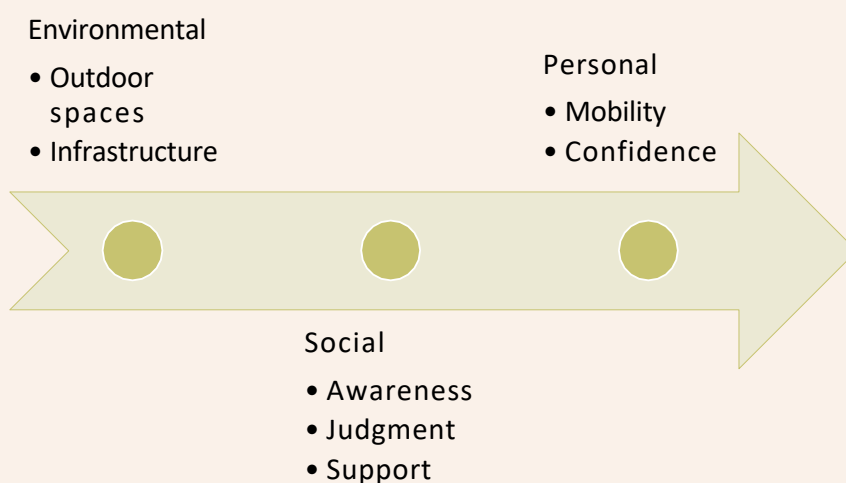
Indoor Nature-Based Occupational Therapy Interventions in an Outpatient Pediatric Clinic

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BACKGROUND

Interacting with nature supports children's development by enhancing cognition and attention, fostering social-emotional well-being and creative play, building resilience, boosting academic performance, increasing physical activity, and reducing emotional and behavioral challenges.¹

Barriers to Accessing Nature^{2,3}



Individuals with conditions impacting physical or cognitive functioning tend to spend less time in nature than those without such conditions.²

Fewer opportunities for learning, play, and social connection.⁴

Outpatient pediatric occupational therapists are well suited to address deficits related to a disconnect from nature by helping children perform everyday activities and enhance independence and participation across home, school, and community settings through the integration of nature-based elements into interventions.

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

GOAL

Develop and implement **an indoor nature-based occupational therapy program** within a traditional outpatient pediatric clinic using nature-inspired interventions to support performance and participation in common childhood occupations and pilot the program with at least five pediatric clients.

OBJECTIVE 1

Familiarize myself with nature-based occupational therapy practice for pediatric clients.

OBJECTIVE 3

Launch a six-week pilot of the nature-based occupational therapy intervention program in a traditional outpatient pediatric clinic.

OBJECTIVE 2

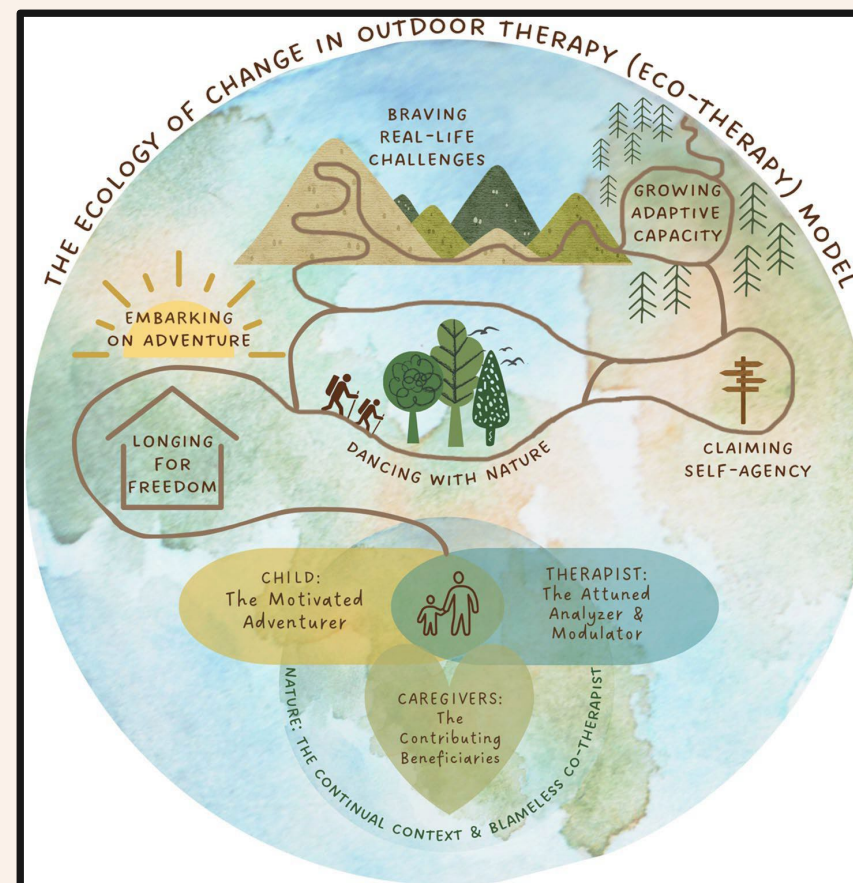
Develop an indoor nature-based occupational therapy intervention program to be implemented in a traditional outpatient pediatric clinic.

OBJECTIVE 4

Evaluate the effectiveness, (feasibility & acceptability) of the nature-based interventions.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The Ecology of Change in Outdoor Therapy (ECO-Therapy) Model¹



As the ECO-Therapy model highlights nature's influence on the pediatric occupational therapy process, it informs the design of this nature-based intervention program by using nature as both the medium and catalyst to support children's holistic growth, including emotional readiness, engagement, relational dynamics, and functional skill development.¹

PROGRAM DEVELOPED

Feeding 	Ability to demonstrate flexible eating behaviors without significant food selectivity and participate in appropriate and independent mealtime routines.	Visual Motor/ Perceptual & Handwriting 	Such as writing, coloring, drawing, copying shapes or letters, completing puzzles, and participating in classroom learning activities.
Gross Motor 	Such as crawling, walking, running, jumping, throwing a ball, moving around the playground, and riding a bike.	Fine Motor 	Ability to manipulate small objects during play, cut with scissors, manage clothing fasteners, tie shoes, and type.
Cognition/ Problem-Solving 	Including attention, memory, problem-solving, organization, and safety awareness.	Sensory Integration & Emotional Regulation 	Ability to receive, organize, and interpret sensory information from the body and environment for self-regulation and motor planning, as well as building self-advocacy skills.

A special thank you to Colorado in Motion Kids for the opportunity to pilot my program at their site and for their support throughout the Capstone process.

EVALUATION

Emotional Regulation

- A child strokes the wooden balance beam and says, "It makes me feel so calm."

Engagement

- A child uses the regulation rocks to discuss emotions and asks, "Can we do two more?"
- After completing a shape-building activity with the pattern pegs, a child requests, "Can I quickly see if I can build something with just one rubber band, please?"

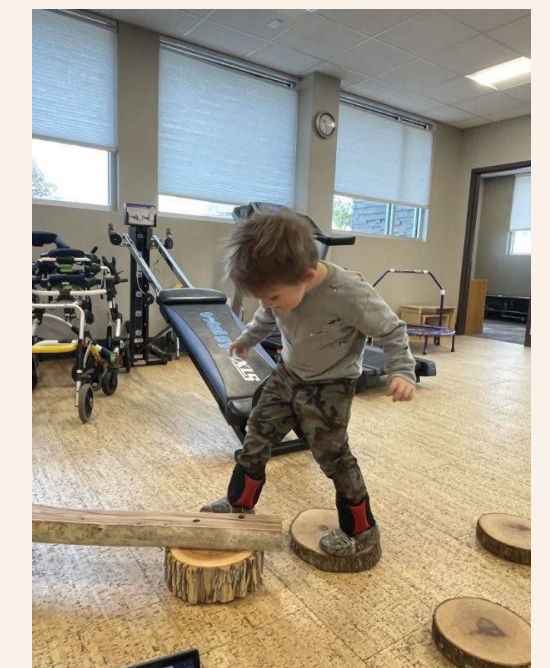
Idea Formation/Creativity

- A child creates an obstacle course and, without prompting, chooses to include the alphabet rocks, saying, "You're going to tell me which rocks to collect as I do my obstacle course."

Acceptability, Feasibility, Sustainability

- "All interventions were able to be adapted to a variety of patients with different skill limitations."
- "Interventions were effective and able to be continued after this experience ends."
- "All of the interventions created a nature experience that transported our patients into a magical, outside world."

GUIDEBOOK



SUMMARY & REFERENCES

Nature-based interventions can be successfully and meaningfully implemented within traditional indoor clinic settings, demonstrating that creating and integrating such programs indoors is both feasible and impactful.

