

JASPER and Social Participation in Children With Autism: A Systematic Review

Hawaii Pacific University, Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program, Honolulu, Hawaii

Payton M. Burns, OTS., Kennedy Lindsey, OTS., Rebekah McCoy, OTS., Alena Nardinger-Prosser, OTS

Research Question

How does the JASPER model improve social participation outcomes for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

Introduction

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects approximately **1 in 36** children in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2022).
- Core challenges include **joint attention, play, communication, and social participation** (JASPER, 2026).
- Joint Attention, Symbolic Play, Engagement, and Regulation (JASPER) is a naturalistic, play-based intervention targeting these foundational skills (Jasper, 2026).
- Occupational therapists use evidence-based interventions like JASPER to support meaningful participation (AOTA, 2020).

Method

- Design:** Systematic review following PRISMA guidelines
- Databases:** ERIC, MEDLINE, CINAHL Complete, Academic Search Complete, Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection
- Years:** 2016-2025
- Search Terms:** ASD • JASPER • Toddlers • Preschoolers • Early Childhood
- Inclusion Criteria:**
 - Peer-reviewed studies
 - Children with ASD
 - JASPER intervention
 - Social participation outcomes
- Quality Assessment:** Analysis using AOTA Risk-of-Bias tables
- Studies Included:** 7 studies (5 Level I, 2 Level II)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY USING THE JASPER MODEL

OTs use play-based, relationship-centered strategies to support foundational social skills.

JASPER COMPONENTS



THE OT GOAL

To help children build the social communication and play skills they need to fully participate in the occupations that matter most.



Results

- Nine articles were initially found. Seven studies met the inclusion criteria. Articles were assessed according to risk of bias, level of evidence, and quality.
- All studies noted increased social participation, joint attention, improved communication and interaction with others.
- One study specifically noted increased responsive behavior from child and caregiver
- Six studies noted increases in functional play, diversity of play, and cognitive skills

Discussion

What does this mean for OT?

- JASPER supports meaningful social participation
- Caregiver coaching improves carryover
- Effective across home, school, clinic, and community settings.
- Evidence-based play-focused approach improving social participation skills for meaningful engagement in everyday occupations
- Self-regulation tools

Conclusion

Evidence supports **JASPER as an effective intervention** for improving social participation in young children with ASD through gains in **joint attention, communication, engagement, and play.**

Reference



Figure 1: OT Application (ChatGPT)