

# The Physical, Social, And Emotional Impact of the Use of a Therapeutic Tricycle on Children: Parents' Perspectives

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## Abstract

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to analyze existing data on the physical, social, and emotional impact a therapeutic tricycle has on children with special needs. **METHODS:** Retrospective data from over 180 respondents to a parent survey pertaining to these topics were analyzed and coded. Researchers used the thematic coding process including open, axial, and selective coding until themes emerged. **FINDINGS:** Prevailing themes generated from the data include increased physicality, enhanced social inclusion and participation, increased independence, and improved emotional well being. **CONCLUSION:** Results revealed that a therapeutic tricycle can positively impact the physical, social, and emotional aspects of the lives of children with special needs.

## Introduction

In the United States, riding a bike marks a specific and important milestone for many children. In addition to the physical benefits, riding a bike is a societal norm and promotes opportunities for increased independence, self-efficacy, and societal participation (MacDonald, Jaszewski, Esposito, & Ulrich, 2011). Access to adaptive equipment such as an AmTryke<sup>®</sup> may enable children with disabilities to engage in activities which otherwise they could not experience. Successful participation in normal life activities help decrease the prejudice and exclusion often experienced by persons with disabilities (Wilhite, 2009).

## Research Question

What impact, if any, does a therapeutic tricycle have on the emotional, social, and physical status of children with special needs?

## Methods

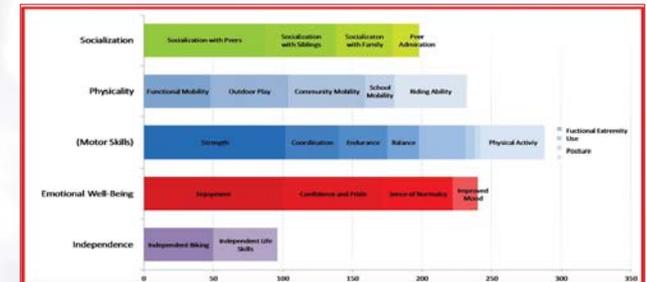
### Qualitative design using retrospective data

- **Parent Survey** (180 respondents)
  - 20 overall questions with 8 personal comment boxes
- **Data Analysis**
  - Researchers used the thematic coding process
  - Open coding ---Axial coding ---Selective coding
  - Qualitative Data Analysis Software: NVivo 10 (QSR International,2012)

### AmTryke<sup>®</sup> Parent Survey Questions

- Has your child or rider enjoyed using the AmTryke<sup>®</sup>?
- Do you feel the AmTryke<sup>®</sup> has had a positive impact on your child/rider?
- Are there tasks your rider/child is now able to perform that he/she was not able to do before using an AmTryke<sup>®</sup>?
- Have you noticed areas of improvement since your child or rider began using an AmTryke<sup>®</sup>? In which areas have you noticed improvements?
- Please indicate in which areas you have noticed improvement in your rider/child's *physical abilities* since using an AmTryke<sup>®</sup>.
- Has your child or rider attempted to perform tasks independently since using an AmTryke<sup>®</sup>?
- In which environments does your child or rider frequently ride an AmTryke<sup>®</sup>?

## Findings (Themes)



### Supporting Quotes



## Discussion

### Limitations

Retrospective data without access to the participants  
No ability to follow up on questions

### Recommendations

- Incorporation of trikes in therapy treatment
- Further research on benefits of a therapeutic trike is warranted

### Implications

Improving areas of occupation through use of therapeutic equipment  
Play and leisure as therapy throughout the lifespan

## Conclusion

Overall, results revealed that a therapeutic tricycle can positively impact the physical, social, and emotional aspects of the lives of children with special needs.

## References

- MacDonald, Megan; Jaszewski, Christie; Esposito, Phil; Ulrich, Dale. (2011, September 22). The effect of learning to ride a two-wheel bicycle on the social development of children with autism spectrum disorder The Free Library. (2011). Retrieved March 19, 2013 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The effect of learning to ride a two-wheel bicycle on the social...+a0273900483](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+effect+of+learning+to+ride+a+two-wheel+bicycle+on+the+social...+a0273900483)
- Wilhite, B., Shank, J., (2009) In praise of sport: Promoting sport participation as a mechanism of health among persons with a disability, *Disability and Health Journal*, 2 (3), 118.