

# The Effects of a Therapeutic Dance Class on Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of weekly dance classes on the balance, daily occupational performance, and quality of life of a single participant with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## Background

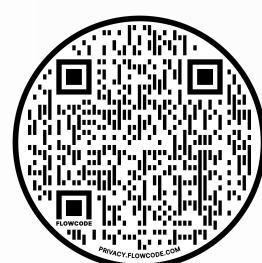
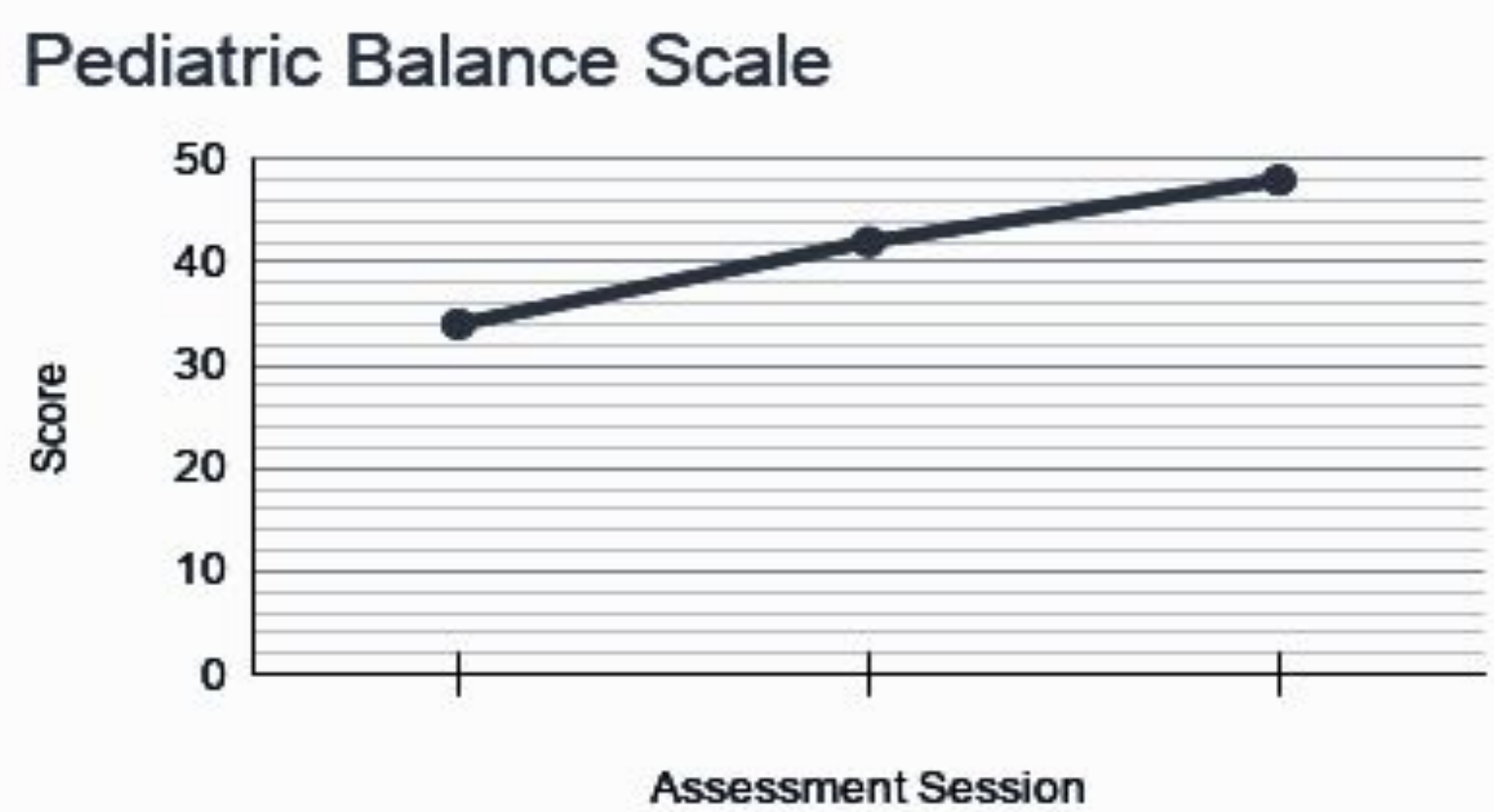
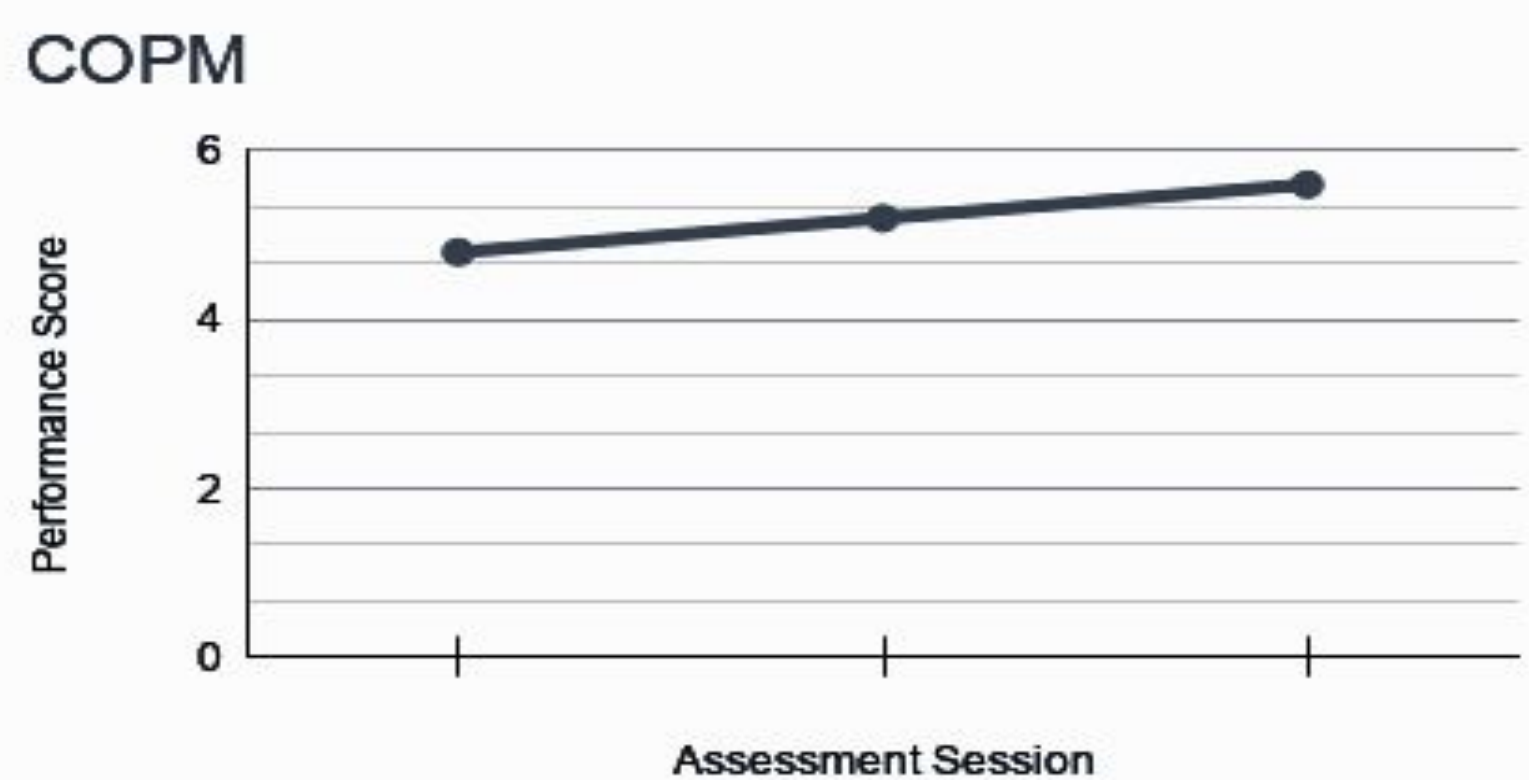
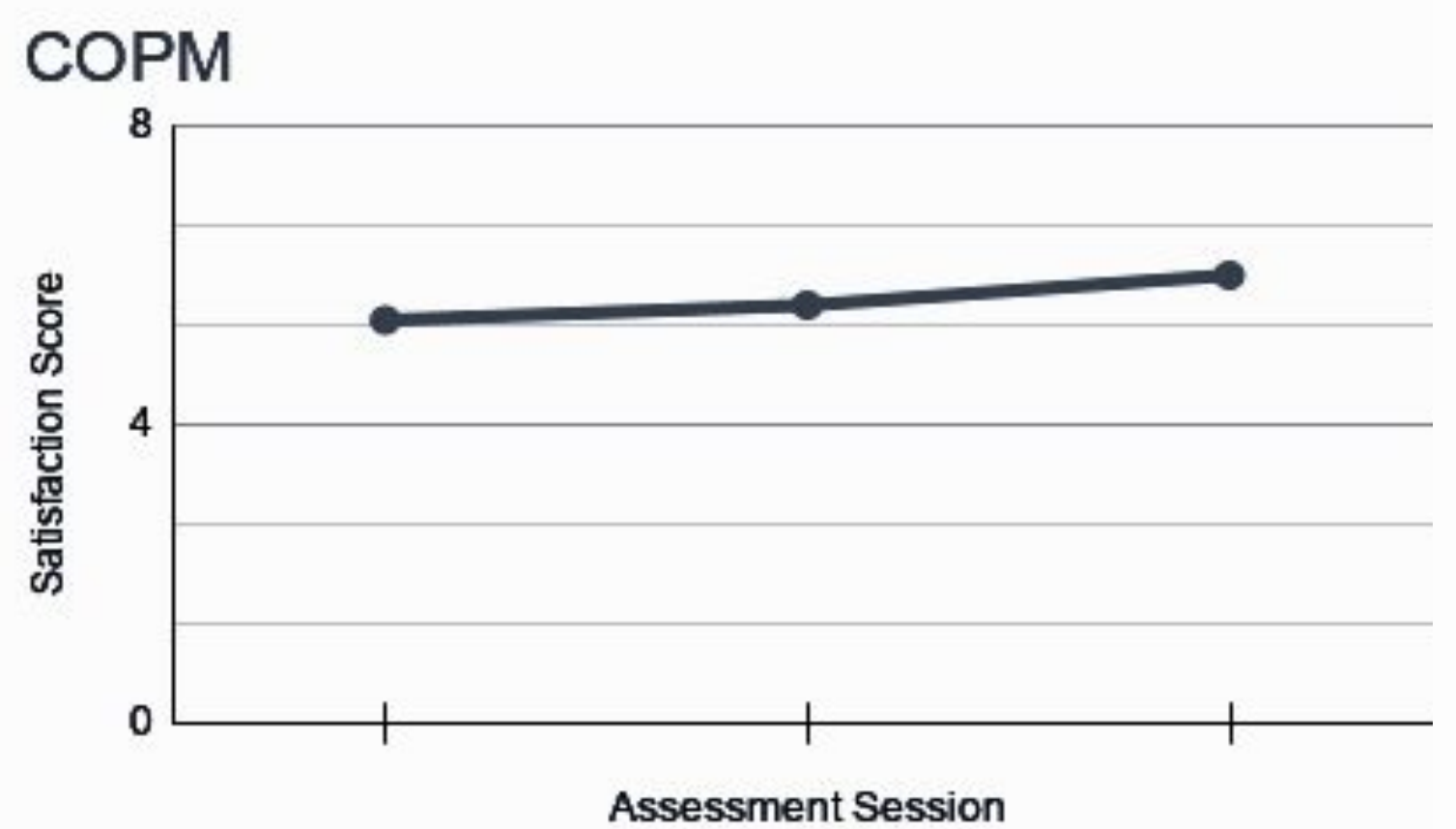
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
  - Developmental disorder that effects social, communication and behavioral challenges (CDC, 2020)
  - Differs from person to person
  - Most common pediatric developmental condition
  - In 2020, 1 in 54 children were diagnosed with ASD (CDC, 2020)
  - ASD is 4 times more prevalent in boys than girls (CDC, 2020)
  - Girls have less obvious signs (CDC, 2020)
- **What is Dance Movement Therapy**
  - Movement to strengthen the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of the individual (ADTA, 2013)
- **Benefits**
  - Increased flexibility, muscle strength and tone, endurance, balance and spatial awareness, and an overall positive feeling of well-being (Alpert, 2011)

## Methods

- **Chance to Dance- Dancing on Main dance studio**
  - Children with neurological, cognitive, behavioral, and physical disabilities can attend classes
  - Typical class outline
    - Free time
    - Stretch
    - Interactive dance
    - Routine
    - Gym time
- **Partnership with Studio Owner**
- **Single Case study involving a child with ASD: Purposive Sampling**

## Results

- Dance therapy had a positive effect on this child with ASD
  - Increased balance
  - Increased quality of life
  - Increased occupational performance
- Dancer Evaluation Survey



## OT's Role

- Incorporate movement into therapy sessions activities of daily living
- Increase independence, quality of life and social skills
- Occupational therapists can become certified in Rhythm Works Integrative Dance