

# **The impact of Socio-Pedagogic Equine-Activities Intervention on Special Education Pupils with Neurological Disorders**

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# Socio-pedagogic equine activities

Activities in cooperation with peers and horses

- *human-equine bond and social education*
- to support the social growth and welfare
  - at-risk children
  - youth and adults
- to help them who have difficulties interacting with others
  - social and psychic problems
  - difficulties integrating with communities
  - difficulties taking part in a group

## **Socio-pedagogic equine activities...continues**

- improves the interaction and group working skills
- a horse feels and answers the feelings and gives direct response to client's action
- a horse does not discriminate against anyone
- the respectable appearance of the horse limits behavior at the stable
  - the stable area, with its strict structure, is a safe environment
- provides the possibility of promoting their own share in peer activities
  - empowerment
  - experiences of nature

# Research

- ▶ standardized activities

EPIC Training (*Equine Partners In Counseling*)

ART (Aggression Replacement Training)

*Mathematics*

- ▶ longitudinal study (pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test)

- ▶ controlled

population is homogenous

and clearly described

- ▶ three outcomes measured

*cognitive, emotional, behavioral*

Rejections

- ▶ not a *multi-center* study

# Quantitative research

## 1. Experimental groups

two special education classes (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders)

- Socio-Pedagogic Equine Activities for 8 x 90 minutes

## 2. Control group A

*two special education classes (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders)*

- ART 8 x 90 minutes

## 3. Control group B

*A special education class (7<sup>th</sup> graders)*

- Math lessons 8 x 90 minutes

## 4. Control group C

*two special education classes (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders)*

- *received no intervention*

# Activities

- ▶ Kay Sudekum Trotter: *EPIC Training: Treating at-risk youth and adolescents with equine assisted counseling (2008)*
  - fitted in eight sessions and Finnish environment
  - experimental group visited the stable during their school day on Fridays (spring 2009)

Adults and instructors:

Special education teacher

School assistant (3rd graders)

A Trainee

Researcher

# Measures

- ▶ The Children's Loneliness Questionnaire (*Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw 1984*)
- ▶ The Empathy Questionnaire (Davis 1980)
- ▶ Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992)
- ▶ Locus of Control Scale (Nowicki & Strickland 1973)
- ▶ Human/Pet Relationship (Siegel 1990)
- ▶ Youth Self Report (Achenbach 1991)
  
- ▶ Teacher's Report Form (Achenbach 1991)
  
- ▶ Youth Self Report for Parents (Achenbach 1991)

*...Diaries and "stories"...*

# Still working with results, but...

- ▶ *Student welfare group* noticed incredible change of empathy
- ▶ Experimental group (3rd graders) used to be a weekly client in peer mediation before the intervention, but very few cases after (during the school year 2009-2010)
- ▶ Teachers got to know their pupils better and notice new things about them (helped in classroom situations)
- ▶ Pupils got to know each others and their teacher better...
- ▶ Parents and pupils had a nice, positive subject to talk about on Fridays => positive feedback for pupils and parents were openly interested in pupils' school day



# Thank you!