The arts are an accessible way to facilitate friendships while promoting overall health and wellbeing.

The arts meet CYwD needs for oneself by creatively encouraging self-expression, meaningful participation, and exploration of one’s identity.1,4

The arts meet CYwD needs from others by allowing children to engage with peers in diverse ways, while providing opportunities to connect and be accepted.1,4

The arts meet CYwD needs from the environment by being an accessible and easily adaptable medium to accommodate diverse needs. Specific spaces, tools, and abilities are not necessary to engage with art.1,4

Conclusions

The arts can create spaces that make friendships a possibility.

By implementing Arts-Based Programming at Holland Bloorview, children can participate meaningfully while promoting their overall health.

The arts are an accessible medium for staff at Holland Bloorview to implement in any space a child is present.

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Background

Social connectedness is a well-known determinant of health.2

Children and youth with disabilities (CYwD) experience more social exclusion than their peers without disability.3

The arts have potential to facilitate friendships, however research on this is lacking.

Our goal is to explore how the arts meet three essential needs that we identified as foundational to friendship development:

Needs for oneself

Needs from others

Needs from the environment

Research Question

How does arts-based programming facilitate friendships for children by meeting three essential needs?

Methods

- Scoping review
- Search of five databases
- Keywords included “Arts-Based Programming”, “Disability”, “Friendship” and related terms

Conclusions

The arts meet CYwD needs for oneself by creatively encouraging self-expression, meaningful participation, and exploration of one’s identity.1,4

I know who I am, and what I have to offer. I’m free to talk in a way that works for me. I’m happy this is a space that includes me.

Scan me to learn more about the importance of friendships!