Presenter's name: Beth Macauley

Degree, affiliation: Ph.D., CCC-SLP, HPCS, FNAP, ACUE. Grand Valley State University

Curriculum vitae:

Beth L. Macauley, PhD, CCC-SLP, HPCS, FNAP, ACUE
Associate Professor, Dept. of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI USA
BOOKS
Macauley, B.L. (2006). Resources for Research and Education in Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapy. Publisher Services: Chicago, IL.
BOOK CHAPTERS
Macauley, B.L. (2021). Animal-Assisted Interventions in Speech-Language Pathology. In Driscol, C. (Ed.) Animal-Assisted Interventions for Health and Human
Macauley, B.L. (2022). Animal-Assisted Therapy for Pediatric Patients. In Atschuler, E., (Ed.) Animal-Assisted Therapy Use by Condition. Boston: Elsevier Publishers
Dr. Macauley received her PhD in 1998 from the University of Florida specializing in neurogenic communication disorders. She has published 34 articles, given 130 conference presentations, facilitated 24 workshops, and presented at every HETI Congress beginning in 2003 in Budapest.

Category: Poster

Topic: Disabilities & Symptoms: Speech and Language Impairment

Authors:

Beth Macauley

Title: CASE REPORT OF EQUINE-ASSISTED SPEECH THERAPY FOR A CHILD WHO SUSTAINED A SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURYA 11 MONTHS OF AGE

Keyword 1: Speech therapy

Keyword 2: traumatic brain injury

Keyword 3: children

Abstract:

Introduction: Traumatic brain injury (TBI) in early childhood can have profound and lasting effects on cognitive and communication abilities. Speech therapy plays a crucial role in rehabilitating language skills following TBI, but traditional methods may not always yield optimal results. This case report discusses the effectiveness of equine-assisted speech therapy in improving receptive and expressive language skills in a 4-year-old child who sustained a severe TBI at 11 months of age.

Methods: A 4-year-old child with a history of severe TBI at age 11 months participated in equine-assisted speech therapy sessions for 8 months. Three therapy equines were used over the 8 months to facilitate progress. Structured activities on horseback focused on promoting sensory integration and facilitating receptive and expressive language skills. The rhythmic movement of the horse and the stimulating environment of the stable were utilized to engage the child and enhance communication abilities.

Results: After 8 months of equine-assisted speech therapy, the 5-year-old child demonstrated significant improvements in both receptive and expressive language skills. At the outset of therapy, the child used grunts to communicate and struggled to understand simple commands. However, following regular sessions incorporating the movement of the horse, the sensory-rich horse environment, and speech therapy techniques, the child is now using three-word phrases and following simple commands.

Conclusion: This case report suggests that equine-assisted speech therapy can be an effective intervention for improving communication outcomes in children with TBI.