

# Cuddling Cubs: Maternal-Infant Attachment Playgroup

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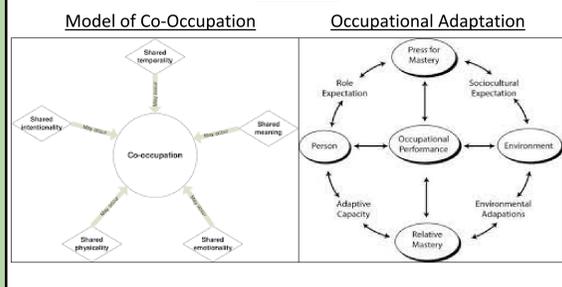
## RESEARCH QUESTION

**What is the impact of a virtual OT-based playgroup on maternal-infant attachment?**

## INTRODUCTION

- Postpartum interventions including psychoeducation, movement, and play demonstrated corresponding improvements in maternal risk factors<sup>2</sup>
- Maternal risk factors impact secure attachment/bonding between mother and infant<sup>1,4,5,6</sup>
- Playgroups are an effective intervention for maternal mental health, mother-infant interactions, and playfulness, but less is known regarding impact on attachment
- Need for research focused on OT-led playgroups, and support groups for typically developing, non-medically fragile infants and moms

## Theory



## MIXED METHODS

Week 1: Overview of Playgroup	Week 2: Routines, Relaxation, & Recovery	Week 3: Tummy Time	Week 4: Infant Massage	Week 5: Social/Cognitive	Week 6: Gross Motor	Week 7: Play	Week 8: Wrap-up of Playgroup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-test (MPAS)</li> <li>• Overview of Modules and Resources</li> <li>• Pre-Intervention Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swaddling</li> <li>• Routines for Mom and Infant</li> <li>• Safe Sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of Tummy Time</li> <li>• Demonstration of Tummy Time Practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of Infant Massage</li> <li>• Demonstration on How and When to Use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling and Encouragement of Prosocial Behaviors and Cognitive Development</li> <li>• Reciprocal Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Gross Motor Infant Development</li> <li>• Healthy Recovery and Physical Movement for Mom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental Milestones</li> <li>• Sensory Integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Tests (MPAS)</li> <li>• Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>• Post Intervention Survey</li> </ul>

- **Quantitative Methods:** Maternal Postnatal Attachment Scale (MPAS) was used to measure maternal-infant attachment.
- **Qualitative Methods:** Video recordings of pre and post interviews. Field notes were taken during each session.
- Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded individually.
- Consensus on coding to determine the overarching themes was achieved after individual coding.
- Member checking ensured that the interpretation of the core themes accurately represented the participants' experiences.



## CLINICAL & RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

- Expand the role of OTs to support maternal-infant occupations and postpartum maternal mental health.
- Further develop OT programs to support postpartum mothers through co-occupation-based activities.
- Increase supporting evidence for virtual implementation of maternal-infant early intervention groups.
- In order to accurately capture attachment a more sensitive measure is necessary.

## RESULTS

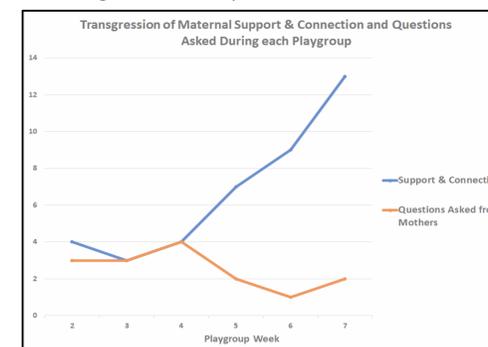
### Qualitative:

Themes	Quotes
Establishing Routines	"New routine is that it is different everyday"
Maternal Insight: Successes and Uncertainties	"...we're getting better at it...like oh that's probably her hunger cue or sleepy cue like where she does her tongue thing I thought it was her just being cute and exploring, it's not. It means that she's hungry so we're learning."
Supports and Self-Care Routines	"I have started walking, so I go outside and walk by myself for about a half hour every day. So my husband takes baby and takes care of the dogs..."
Maternal Autonomy	"Some days you shower, some you don't. Some days you work out, some days you don't. It just depends, I try to do as much stuff as I can when she naps, but it all varies."
Impact of Playgroup	"I think just having a support system and...having people...that are going through the same thing at the same time..."

- **IRB**
  - Obtained IRB approval from the Billings Clinic, protocol number: 21.007

### Quantitative:

- Pre/Post test measures of MPAS.
- Sample size retention resulted in insignificant analysis.



**Graph 1.** Times/week mothers supported and connected with other mothers & number of questions asked during each playgroup.

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  - Funding was obtained through the MOMS grant

## LIMITATIONS

- Retention of sample (from N=12 to N=4) maternal infant couplets.
- Participants were well educated with strong support networks.
- Lack of appropriate assessments limit the ability to measure attachment accurately.
- Further research is needed to understand and accommodate for the differences and individual complexities associated with the postpartum time period.

## CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

- Early evidence suggests an OT-based virtual playgroup increases maternal autonomy through information and peer support.
- The virtual playgroup created access to evidenced-based postpartum information, developmental information, and material insights.
- Participants expressed the desire to maintain contact and initiated the exchange of contact information at the conclusion of the group.
- Importance of addressing and promoting postnatal maternal-infant relationships through an occupational lens should be considered and implemented for all mother-infant dyads.

## References

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