

Samenvatting

In this study the effects of a new developed relaxation-programme called “Mind Magic” on feelings of stress and psychosomatic complaints among children in the age of 8-13 years (N=54) were investigated. The children were randomly assigned to either the experimental condition which participated in the relaxation-programme (N= 30) or to the control condition which participated in a regular non-educative school activity, i.e. free play or drawing (N= 24). We studied whether participation in the programme, consisting of 5 weekly sessions, could significantly decrease feelings of stress and psychosomatic complaints compared to the control condition. We also studied whether participation in every separate session could significantly increase feelings of self-esteem and relaxation in mind and body. Specific distinction was made between the effects of “Mind Magic” on behaviourally inhibited and behaviourally activated children according to the theory of Gray (1973). In earlier research this distinction has not yet been made and we suspected that behaviourally inhibited children would benefit more from “Mind Magic” given their predisposition to feelings of stress. It appeared that “Mind Magic” significantly decreased feelings of stress and has a positive effect on psychosomatic complaints. This result was not found for children with only a high level of behavioural activation, whereas it was particularly strong for children with high behavioural inhibition. The separate sessions all achieved significant higher levels of self-esteem and relaxation in body and mind. Children liked participating in the programme. We conclude that Mind Magic is very effective as a relaxation programme.