Early stimulation through play. Guidelines for the design of toys for use in therapy

Type of Project

Finished research project

Summary

A research study to determine how to use toys as tools for early stimulation. In the study, focused on children from 0–2 years old, experts from early childhood intervention centres analysed 300 toys, including tech-toys. The usability of the toys was evaluated, together with their ludic and therapeutic potential. As most of the materials analysed posed use problems for babies, AIJU created a publication with guidelines on how to make toys and play proposals more suitable for this target. The information was divided into two age groups with specific developmental characteristics: infants aged 0–12 months, and toddlers aged 12–24 months.

Low-tech, high-tech products, services and contexts for play

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The context of use

Rehabilitation center

Type of play in this play system

Cognitive

Practice
Symbolic
Constructive

Social

Solitary

Objectives related to play according to ICF-CY

Play for the sake of play: Major life areas - d880 enagement in play

d8800 solitary play
d8801 onlooker play

Community social and civic life - d920 recreation and leisure time

d9200 play

Play-like activities: Therapeutic and educational objectives

b1 Mental functions
b2 Sensory functions and pain
b3 Voice and speech functions
d1 Learning and applying knowledge (learning through symbolic play, learning through pretend play)
d3 Communication
d4 Mobility

Number of participants

>20

Chronological Age

0-3 years

Development Age

0-3 years

LUDI Categories of disabilities

Mental/intellectual impairments::
moderate
severe
Hearing impairments:
Partially hearing impaired
Visual impairments:
Partially sighted
Blind
Communication disorders (speech and language disorders):
Physical impairments:
Moderate
Severe
Multiple disabilities:

Explanation on the use of low-tech, high-tech devices, services or contexts

Explanation

No instruction, self-discovery of the participant/subject
Guided discovery: therapist/researcher coaches the participant so s/he discovers how to use the assistive technology

Involvement

Adult: therapist/educator/researcher

Role

Non-participatory observer
Participatory observer

Evaluation of objectives and outcome measures

Description of outcome measure(s)

Video analysis
(validated and reliable) outcome measures like tests, self-reports of client/system, questionnaires

Summary of achieved effects

Guidelines for the design of toys for use in early stimulation through play therapy

References to the intervention or research project

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Keywords

Toys, early stimulation, therapy, usability, "tech" toys, infants, toddlers.