

PLAY AND THE DISABLED CHILD

HOW TO PLAY WITH YOUR DISABLED CHILD



2016/1/12/2016
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BACKGROUND - WHY PLAY AS A THEME TODAY

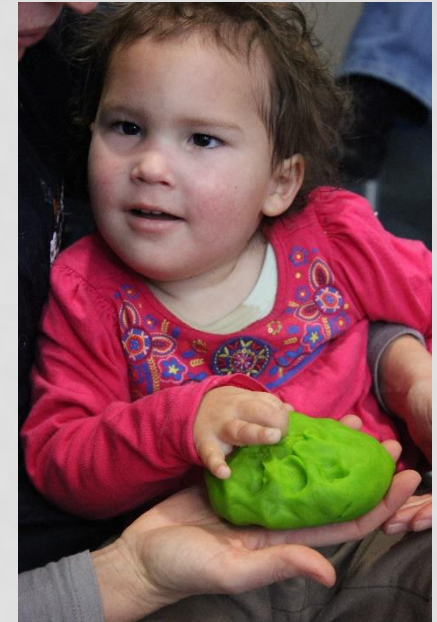
- I am an OT. The core and foundation of what I do, lies in 'occupation' – what we do in our day-to-day living.
- Focus: helping people achieve their highest level of independence and potential .
- Cognitive (mental), physical, and motor skills and in the end to enhance self-esteem, awareness and sense of accomplishment, as well as quality of life.

WHY PLAY?

- Play is a child's work/ occupation.
- Starting point: working with (typically or atypically developing) children.
- Children learn first and most essential skills through play.

Developmental areas :

- sensory awareness (what my body is, can experience and can do)
- communication (not necessarily talking: think eye contact, gestures, a shared smile)
- motor (movement) skills
- cognition (thinking skills)
- social interaction



PLAY SEQUENCES

- All babies: sequence of learning to play.
- First thing with a toy: bring it to his mouth
- Full of with nerves - ideal tool: to explore.
- Seems effortless and spontaneous: typically developing children
- Child with challenges - extra support, encouragement or help to become involved in play.
- Sighted babies suck or chew on objects - advantage of knowing something is available and will reach for it because it looks appealing.
- Can't see a toy, he may not know to reach for it unless you make him aware of what it is and where he can find it.

PIAGET'S STAGES

- Well-known and respected psychologist
- **Unoccupied** – child is not playing, just observing. May be standing or sitting in one spot or performing random movements
- **Solitary (independent)** – alone, focused on activity. Uninterested/ unaware of what others are doing. Common in younger children.
- **Onlooker play** – watches others at play - does not engage. May engage in forms of social interaction - conversation about the play, without joining in the activity. Common in younger children.
- Parallel play – separately from others but close and mimicking their actions.

PIAGET'S STAGES

- **Associative play** – interested in the people playing but not in the activity they are doing. There is a substantial amount of interaction involved, but the activities are not coordinated.
- **Cooperative play** – child is interested both in the people playing and in the activity they are doing. Activity is organized, and participants have assigned roles. There is also increased self-identification with a group, and a group identity may emerge. Relatively uncommon in the preschool years because it requires the most social maturity and more advanced organization skills.

SUSAN KNOX PLAY SCALE

<p>Gross motor: swipes, reaches, plays with hands and feet, moves to continue pleasant sensations</p>	<p>Reaches in prone, crawls, sits with balance, able to play with toy while sitting, pulls to stand, cruises</p>	<p>Stands unsupported, sits down, bends and recovers balance, walks with wide stance, broad movements involving large muscle groups, throws ball</p>
<p>Interest: people, gazes at faces, follows movements, attends to voices and sounds, explores self and objects within reach</p>	<p>Follows objects as they disappear, anticipates movement, goal directed movement</p>	<p>Practices basic movement patterns, experiments in movement, (i.e., balls, trucks, pull toys)</p>

Pretend/Symbolic

Imitation: of observed facial expressions and physical movement (i.e., smiling, pat-a-cake), imitates vocalizations

Imitates observed actions, emotions, sounds and gestures not part of repertoire, patterns of familiar activities

Imitation: of simple actions, present events and adults, imitates novel movements, links simple schemas (i.e., puts person in car and pushes it)

Dramatization: not evident

Not evident

Dramatization: beginning pretend using self (i.e., feeds self with spoon), pretend on animate and inanimate objects

Participation

Type: solitary, no effort to interact with other children, enjoys being picked up, swung

Infant to infant interaction, responds differently to children and adults

Combination of solitary and onlooker, beginning interaction with peers

Material Management

Manipulation: handles, mouths toys, bangs, shakes, hits	Pulls, turns, pokes, tears, rakes, drops, picks up small object	Throws, inserts, pushes, pulls, carries, turns, opens, shuts
Construction: brings two objects together.	Combines related objects, puts object in container	Stacks, takes apart, puts together, little attempt to make product, relates two objects appropriately (i.e., lid on pot)
Purpose: sensation-uses materials to see, touch, hear, smell, mouth	Action to produce effect, cause and effect toys	Variety of schemas, process important, trial and error, relational play
Attention: follows moving objects with eyes, 3 to 5 sec attention	15 sec for detailed object, 30 sec for visual and auditory toy	Attention: rapid shifts

Cooperation: demands personal attention, simple give and take interaction with caretaker (tickling, peek- a-boo)	Initiates games rather than follows, shows and gives objects	Seeks attention to self, demands toys, points, shows, offers toys but somewhat possessive, persistent
Humor: smiles	smiles, laughs at physical games and in anticipation	Laughs at events

Language: attends to sounds and voices, babbles, uses razzing sounds	Gestures intention to communicate, responds to familiar words and facial expressions, responds to questions	Jabbers to self during play, uses gestures and words to communicate wants, labels objects, greets others, responds to simple requests, teases, exclaims, protests, combines words and gestures
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BENEFITS OF PLAY

- Receptive language skills
- Self-concept and self-awareness - which in turn, improves a child's ability to learn
- Facilitates speech for children who are pre-verbal
- Provides motivation for children with "Learned Helplessness"
- Reduce frustration and behaviour problems
- Makes language visible for children on the Autism Spectrum
- Provides multi-sensory input for children who are developmentally challenged
- Facilitates learning by making learning interactive
- Manipulating play materials learns children new concepts by experiencing them
- Means of interacting with peers
- Children learn cause and effect through experience
- Problem solving: children have a natural drive to solve problems and figure out the world.
- It teaches object permanence
- Creates anticipation

CONCLUSION

- Development follows a sequence and in typically developing children the children usually reach certain level of development at certain age (called milestones). These age-bound milestones do not apply to the at-typically developing child.
- However we can use the sequence in which development takes place to guide us in our interaction with our children.



BUILD ON WHAT YOU ARE ALREADY DOING

- Hard to find the time to just play, with demands of feeding, dressing and taking care of the household chores and other children
- Mothers of special needs children even more.
- Good news - can often incorporate play in your daily routines.
- Mother begins to interact very early with a young baby, cuddling, tickling etc. during routines such as dressing, undressing, and so on.

HOW?

- Continue to use this time to bond with your child.
- Make him aware of things around him by pointing and talk about what you see.
- Child close to you when going about your daily routine and talk about what you are doing
- Aware of you and your movements and sounds. Activities that help to use his vision and hearing and practice motor skills, e.g. rolling to see what you do, are forms of play.
- Child is awake for longer periods, divide play period between time spent interacting with a person and being on his own amusing himself.
- Sing and move together. Rock to the rhythm of a tune. Dance to various rhythms with him in your arms. Jog him gently up and down in your arms, on your knees, lie on the floor with him rocking gently side-to-side.

PLAY USING YOUR BODY OR LAP

- Deaf--blind children: introduced to movement through your body
- This will also help him identify you – we each have our own way of moving
- Talk about what you are doing together.
- If you are turning round and round with him say “round and round - stop,” making sure you do stop when you say stop.
- Wait a little while before you repeat an action - gap is important as it gives him a chance to ask you to do it again.
- Look for responses. Even just a small body movement could be his way of asking for more and you need to respond immediately. You can say to him, before you do it again, “you want more?” so that he learns not only have you received his message but can send him one too.
- Once the child realises he is in command of the situation and can get what he wants this way, he has made a big step forward. So watch for these first attempts at communication for they are often fleeting and easily missed, but so very important.

PLAY USING YOUR BODY OR LAP

- Child sitting on your lap, his back firmly against you, play a simple nursery rhyme with actions. If you speak it rhythmically your movements will also be rhythmic. Do it two or three times at the most, but do it every day. Use only this one rhyme during this stage. Do it 'hands on,' acting out the actions, and observe whether the child is beginning to recognise the sequence of movement and through your hands you can feel him beginning to anticipate some of it. Simple patterns of movement and sound help to develop the ability to remember sequences and are a preparation for participation (joining in with you) and later for imitation (by himself).
- Another lap game, which stresses the action the child is making, is to sit with him on your lap as above and gently move his arms up/down, into the midline/out, bring his hands together and bring them to his face. Make up a little sequence of these and do them in the same order each time while saying "up, down" etc.

PLAY USING YOUR BODY OR LAP

- When you introduce your child to a toy, describe it—with words and touch. Sit behind him and, using either the hand-under-hand or hand-over-hand approach, let him feel the toy while you demonstrate how to play with it. When you sit behind your child, your hands are moving in the same direction as his, which makes the teaching process more natural for both of you. Hand-under-hand, in which you place your hand under his, may be more reassuring to your child because you're the one reaching out to touch something unfamiliar, while his hands are "riding along" on the safety of your hands.



PLAYING

PLAY IN PRAM, BUGGY OR CHAIR

- When your is in his buggy and playing by himself, tie things around it, bright, noisy and well-textured things for him to see and feel and knock against as he moves
- Try not to leave your child for prolonged periods in a pram or buggy

PLAY ON THE FLOOR

- Provide a rug or blanket for play on the floor (not to be used for any other purpose). Choose a good texture, a good colour and big enough that as later you can encourage your baby to move about on it. Being put on the rug will act as a signal for the kind of activities we provide there.
- Initially join your baby on the rug and lie beside him. Notice if he is aware of you and respond to any approach he makes. How does he play or move, is he interested in any light source or appear to be listening. If we begin with what interests him and join in with what he does we can lead him from there towards the things we want him to do.

PLAY ON THE FLOOR

- Play tickling games with him not, as yet for him to copy, but creating a climax, which he can learn to anticipate. It provides an input of sounds, words and touch, first slowly, then building up in speed, loudness and nearness. You can make up your own small sequence for this game - watch his response, where in the sequence is he beginning to show recognition.
- Play a game of 'peep-bo' just with your hands gently over his eyes and then releasing them. Use a paper tissue and show him how to pull it off his face then off your face. All these games have to be fun and you must put this over to him in the way you talk to him and laugh about it. This helps towards learning that things remain in existence even if they are not visible.
- Always join in with him - crawl with him, over and beside him, roll to and away from him.

PLAY ON THE FLOOR

- When he is on the floor rug incidental experience can be made available to him by placing a sensory mat (that you can make by stitching different types of fabric together) in his reach.
- For listening or vibration cover some small cartons with the same material each containing different sound making things - dried beans, sand, pebbles, buttons, etc, plus one with nothing in it - and encourage him to shake them and listen. This will also teach him about difference in weight as well.

PLAY WITH PHYSICAL MOVEMENT

- With as much of your body as possible in contact with his, take your baby's hands and move them (a) up and down and (b) in circles. Make these movements as big as your child's arms allow and do it rhythmically. When he is used to this routine, stop just before completion and see if the child's movements suggest he would know how to continue and complete the sequence.
- Play any of the action games which require him to touch his head, eyes, nose, mouth and ears - let him feel yours and play the game touching you.

PLAY WITH PHYSICAL MOVEMENT

- Rub his arm (leg, hand or face) then 'hands on' show him how to do the same on you
- Make a music tape, which contains two minutes of sound, followed by two minutes of silence, repeated several times. Watch for a response from your child. Is he aware of the difference between sound and no sound? If there is no listening response put his hand on the recorder. Is he aware of vibration compared with no vibration?
- Show him how to hide a toy under a cushion, tissue or small box and then how to find it - make this lots of fun. If he can play this game we can be pretty sure he has an idea of object permanence. To find hidden things is a useful skill later on in specific learning situations, i.e. colour matching.

TYPES OF TOYS

- **Action toys**

- Introduce toys that 'do' things, - any small toy that requires a simple action to activate it. Let your child have his hand under yours when you operate the switch, then let him feel the result of your action.
- He is learning he can influence objects. "I do" leads to "what else can I do".
- Introduce one or two toys that can be pulled along with a string and show him how, by pulling the string, he can get toys he might otherwise be unable to get for himself.
- Have a few toys in a box and show him how to find them, examine them, one at a time and let him play with them. You can also have two boxes so he can take things out of one and put them in the other (fix the two boxes with a clip so they stay together).

TOYS

Household items as toys

Objects from the kitchen cabinet can be as entertaining as store-bought toys. For example, you can show and tell your baby how to make noise with pot covers. With his hands on the covers and your hands over his, you can tell him, "Let's make a banging noise with these pot covers. We'll bang them together like this," as you guide his hands toward each other. After the two of you get tired of banging, you can also take a quieter step forward by showing him how to put the lids on top of the pots, again explaining what the two of you are doing, "These are pots that I cook your lunch in. Let's put the covers back on the pots."

TOYS

Grouping toys

Grouping toys is especially beneficial for blind children, but for other children as well as it helps to develop concepts

Avoid giving your child a pile of 'allsorts' to play with - give him different selections of toys that have something in common, such sets of things for shape, or colour, or sound or texture.

Talk to him about them and show him how to explore them before leaving him to play for a while with them.

You can give him sets of things that are connected with daily routines - a cup, spoon, hairbrush, sponge, etc. to explore and play with. Watch to see if he recognises any of these - does the spoon go to his mouth, the brush to his hair? You can remind him of their uses before he is left to play with them by showing him.

Some more advanced activities

Show him how to find things under cartons or hidden under cups

Observe his response to colour. Put several objects of different colours in a line in front of him. Does he regularly pick the same one first? Are his favourite toys of the same colour? Encourage him to scan (a visual skill) by spacing several different colour toys across the table and getting him to look from one to the other (use a torch if necessary) before choosing one.

As mobility increases, your child may want to explore more and be less inclined to sit and play. Whilst he needs to discover things for himself, he will always need your help in interpreting daily life activities, so plan to keep two or three short periods every day when you sit down and play, that is 'play with a purpose.' It is good for him to learn to sit still for short periods.



Home made toys



HOW LONG?

How long depends on his interest, if he is getting bored try a new activity or change the focus of the current one. If the child is interested, do not change for the sake of change.

Introduce some more action rhymes. If you leave out a bit of the sequence does he notice this?

POSITION IN WHICH TO PLAY

- Just sitting can be boring so give him lots of sitting experiences - in a rubber tyre, on a beanbag, in a clothes basket, or on a child's chair. A cardboard box is also nice to play in – and it gives support to sit up in
- When he is playing by himself discourage him from lying on his back (unless this is part of motor development) but encourage him to lie on his tummy, putting interesting things on and under his play rug that will entice him to try to creep to get them.
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IDEAS FOR HOME MADE TOYS

- Plastic cartons with clothes pegs clipped onto them for him to take off and put on.
- Matchboxes covered in different materials - with a favourite snack inside them, which he can learn to open.
- With some hardboard make several play boards for
- A switch board - various kinds of switches which he can operate (fix some different coloured fairy light bulbs on the board for him to switch on)
- A board with various pockets fixed to it into which you can put different things (each day) for him to find
- One with a set of door fastenings, ie a handle, a knob that turns, a large hook and eye, a button catch, a latch and so on.
- Another with doors, which he can open, and find/see inside different textures, outlines of shapes of different things.
- One with just hooks on it and a box of things he can hang on them, take them off and change them around for himself.



Home made texture board

GAMES FOR FINE MOTOR SKILLS

To help him with fine finger skills you can let him find and pick up such things as Smarties, sultanas or get such things from the bottom of a carton or cup.

When you are playing with your child, particularly in the 'hands on' position at a table, if you sit opposite a mirror, you will be able to see exactly what he is doing as well as feel it.

THANK YOU

