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The Effect of Caregiver Training on Time-Use of Children Living in Residential Care Facilities

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Science Degree in Occupational Therapy.

Johannesburg, 2010

WITSETD

Declaration

I, Lyndsay Koch, declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in Occupational Therapy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other University.

_____

_____05____ day of _____November_____ 2010

WitsETD

For Lillian, Faith and Mighty,
who taught me the true meaning of courage

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Publications and Presentations arising from this Study

The results from this study have been presented at the following meetings;

1. Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa (OTASA) Biannual National Congress; 2009 July; Port Elizabeth

2. University of the Witwatersrand School of Therapeutic Science Research Day; 2009 August; Johannesburg

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Abstract

Infants and toddlers living in residential care facilities are at risk of developmental delay. Environmental factors contributing to this risk are the temporal context (how children spend their time) and social context (how and when caregivers interact with children). This study compared time-use patterns of children living in residential care facilities where caregiver training had previously taken place versus those in facilities where caregiver training had not taken place using a non-experimental, cross-sectional static group comparison study design. Spot observations were used to estimate time-use patterns of infants and toddlers living in residential care in Johannesburg. Results show that caregiver training increased the quantity of time infants spent with their caregivers (temporal context) and the quality of time toddlers spent with their caregivers (social context). Thus caregiver training has the potential to improve the environment in residential care facilities and can be used as an intervention strategy by occupational therapists.

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Definitions

Areas of Occupation: A classification and description of all the activities that occur within the lifespan of any individual, group or population. Areas of Occupation can be divided into different categories (1). The following are pertinent to this study:

(a) Personal Management: Refers to any activity that is related to the care of the self, particularly your own body (washing, dressing, toileting, eating). Another common term used to describe these activities is that of activities of daily living or ADL (1).

(b) Meaningful Activity: Within this study the areas of work, education, leisure, play and social participation were collapsed into one concept, that of meaningful activity. This is defined as any task outside of personal management or sleep that is purposeful and developmentally appropriate (including developmentally appropriate play) as well as any learning-based task (2).

(c) Non-meaningful Activity: Within this study this concept was added to describe any non-purposeful or developmentally inappropriate activities, such as wandering aimlessly around a room, repetitive movements such as rocking and inappropriate banging or sucking of toys. This includes immature or inappropriate play (2).

(d) Sleep: Refers to a recurring need for rest that is universal in all humans and represents a physiological state that mimics unconsciousness (3). It is necessary for active and healthy participation in all other areas of occupation and human life (1).

Caregiver: A person whose primary task is to take care of an infant or toddler. Within the residential care facilities this is a person who is hired by the facility and whose primary task is taking care of the infants and toddlers resident in that facility (4) (5).

Developmental delay: Refers to the inability to achieve normal developmental milestones and can affect motor, cognitive, emotional or social skills. Developmental problems can have a prenatal, perinatal or early childhood origin. Developmental delay can form part of a syndrome (such as Down syndrome) or can be due to an unknown cause (3) (6).

Environment: Refers to the surroundings of individuals and groups that are separate and external to the individual or group. It is within these external surroundings that occupation occurs (1). The environment can be divided into different contexts, three of which are pertinent to this study;

(a) Physical context: Refers to all non-human surroundings and includes the natural environment (trees, grass, rivers), the built environment (streets, buildings, drains) and all the inanimate objects in the environment (chairs, tables, toys) (1).

(b) Social context: Refers to human surroundings, particularly human relationships, interactions, expectations and emotions and is sometimes called the socio-emotional environment (1). In this study the social context is described specifically as the ***quality*** of time in terms of the interaction between caregivers and infants and toddlers. This relates specifically to communication, children's language use and in one-on-one interaction with their primary caregivers.

(c) Temporal context: Refers to the relationship between time and the environment (1). In this study the temporal context is described specifically in terms of the ***quantity*** of time toddlers and infants spend in personal management, meaningful and non-meaningful activities and alone or in contact with others.

Infant: In this study, an infant is described as a child between the ages of two months and twelve months, i.e. in the first year of life (2) (7).

Nonprofit Organisations defined by the Nonprofit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997 as "*a trust, company or other association of persons – (a) established for a public purpose; and (b) the income and property of which are not distributable to its members or office-bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered"* (p2 paragraph25) (8).

Residential Care Facility: A facility that is set up to care for 6 or more children outside of their normal family structure. This may be a registered or unregistered facility (4) (5).

Special needs residential care facility: For the purposes of this study this is defined as any facility that exclusively accommodates children with a diagnosed physical or mental disability.

Toddler: In this study, a toddler is described as a child between the ages of thirteen months and twenty-four months, i.e. in the second year of life (2) (7).

Abbreviations

NPO: - Nonprofit Organizations

HIV: Human Immunodificiency Virus

AIDS: Acquired Immunodificiency

StatsSA: Statistics South Africa

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