Observing and developing play skills in children that are blind.

Abstract

Play skills are important in children’s general development. Because the lack of visual information affects all aspects of development in the early years, children with blindness or visual impairment adopt play styles that are different from their sighted peers of the same age. This study proposes to characterize and support the play style of two children with blindness aged 3 years 3 months and 4 years 10 months.

Participant's general developmental was assessed using the Bielefeld Observation Scale-Blind Scale (BOS-Blind). Play behaviors of the two participants were filmed then rated using the Play Development Scale for Blind and visually impaired children (PDS-BL) during the three months of the intervention program. Parents of the participants filled a questionnaire during the weekly home visits, recording their child's play behaviors, play materials, and the involvements of adults or siblings during play time between the sessions. Parents also wrote in a logbook their comments and concerns about their children with visual impairments and the effects on their lives.

The results show that manipulative play is the dominant play level for both participants and symbolic is the least common regardless of their difference in age and parents' level of education. The participants use similar play materials, live in comparable social environment and their parents have similar concerns. It is proposed that the intervention program, which involved the parents, helped in increasing the frequencies of appearance of the existed play behaviors as well as the variety of these play behaviors mainly at the manipulative and relational play levels.