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The Importance of Play: Well vs. Hospitalized Children

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Abstract

Play is an important part of children's growth. It contributes to the development of physically healthy and emotionally stable children. When a child's health is compromised and leads to hospitalization, play is used as both a distraction and recreational tool. It helps the child understand, accept, and deal with the hospitalization. It also contributes to healthy growth and development. The role of play in well children is compared to those in hospitalized children.

The Importance of Play: Well vs. Hospitalized Children

Play is a very important task in the development of children. It helps children grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Play helps children practice old skills and learn new ones, experiment ideas to challenge their curiosities, and solve problems through trials.

Benefits for Well Children

The advantages of play in children are immeasurable. Children of all ages benefit of play and face potential for delays if they are deprived from it. Play is important on different levels that contribute to optimal growth and development. For instance, it helps with coordination and muscle growth, and it releases children's energy in a healthy way. Play also helps children prepare for the future by portraying gender role activities and being involved in games that imitate adult's lives. Overall, play helps children develop communication and language skills, imagination, symbolic thinking, and intuitiveness.

Benefits for Hospitalized Children

Hospitalized children benefit from the advantages of play that apply to well children. However, there are some additional advantages that pertain to hospitalized children in order to help them through their stay in the hospital. One of the biggest roles of play for hospitalized children is distraction. Children mirror their fears, tensions, and dreams through play. They use play to express themselves if they lack the vocabulary or if they are unable to speak because of

an invasive procedure. Children act out their worries through play, which helps them communicate their feelings to caregivers (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2007).

In a hospital setting, play is often used as psychotherapy. Play increases cooperation levels between the children and caregivers. It reveals the children's inner personalities in the same manner as deep conversation. Therefore, the fears and anxieties of children are identified, which helps caregivers relieve the worries by eliminating their origins (Bracegirdle, 1992). Play allows children to visualize the procedures that they undergo. For instance, caregivers can demonstrate the procedures on a doll and give the children a chance to return the demonstration. Likewise, children can pretend to be nurses or physicians doctors and help themselves feel better.

Hospitals for children often have playrooms as recreation sites. The playroom is a place where children feel safe and relaxed. The playroom is an escape from hospital reality. The reality in hospitals is that caregivers are those in charge. However, children learn to take command through play. They are allowed to choose the games and roles that they want to portray (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2007). Moreover, through play, children learn about solutions of the real life problems that they go through (Bracegirdle, 1992).

Last but not least, hospitalized children use play as a mean of socialization. Through mutually enjoyed activities, children learn to connect and help each other through difficult hospital procedures. As a result, children's stress is relieved and their tensions are alleviated.

Summary

Play is an important life passage in children of all ages and conditions. It allows for children to be physically strong, emotionally stable, and psychologically imaginative. Play helps in the formation of happy and healthy children both in the well and hospitalized conditions.

References

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