Book Reviews

Development of Hand Skills in the Child


Development of Hand Skills in the Child is a refreshingly concise, yet complete, soft-bound reference for the pediatric occupational therapy practitioner. It has no peer for current occupational therapy theory and practice areas, such as in-hand manipulation, the neurodevelopmental treatment approach to hand function, eye-hand coordination, and upper-extremity casting. Each chapter covers one topic, including theory, patient assessment, functional treatment, equipment resources, and references. The editors have succeeded in producing a comprehensive yet succinct developmental hand text in eight chapters ranging from 10 to 17 pages in length.

Peloski begins the book with the chapter entitled “Central Nervous System Control of Precision Movements of the Hand.” Detailed flow charts clarify research findings and relate them to clinical practice. Her style inspires the reader to participate in research and raises the comfort level between theory and treatment.

The most innovative chapters are those on handwriting and in-hand manipulation, areas that have lacked research and effective treatment references in the past. In Chapter 3, Exner presents her definition of in-hand manipulation, “the process of adjusting objects within the hand after grasp” (p. 39) and beginning use of her Test of In-Hand Manipulation (TIME). Her knowledge base incorporates maximizing the development of intrinsic muscles in children. Detailed descriptions of translation, shift, and rotation are provided with new findings of hand development in children between 2 and 3 years of age. Readers will also glean data regarding optimal size of objects for use in treatment.

In Chapter 5, entitled “Handwriting: Evaluation and Intervention in School Settings,” Cunningham Amundson proposes reasons for a limited occupational therapy knowledge base, including rising incidence of learning disabilities, few evaluation tools, low treatment priority of students, and the view that handwriting is traditionally an academic domain. Difficulties in handwriting are ascribed to poor development of sensorimotor systems affecting neuromuscular, sensory-integrative, or motor control systems. Remedial interrelated approaches (e.g., neuromuscular, multisensory, biomechanical [grasp and equipment], motivational, and acquisition) are presented. The latter approach is extensively described, consisting of sequenced stages and grading of tasks. Figures include grasps on writing tools, components of handwriting legibility, a self-correction checklist for legibility, and proper positioning of paper for left-handed and right-handed students. Many individualized and classroom interventions are found in this section. There is a table of five handwriting assessments, but it lacks information on practical use, general cost, test-retest application, and any remedial activities.

Grasp on writing tools is also found in “Therapeutic Fine Motor Activities for Preschoolers” by Carol Anne Meyers. The information she provides is superior to that presented in the chapter on handwriting, because statistics of use for various grasps are described along with reproducible drawings for parents and teachers. The essential value of this text is the way in which ideas overlap between the experts, which allows the reader to incorporate an eclectic treatment strategy. Myers acknowledges Mary Bernhow’s rationale and input on the activities in this chapter. Vertical work surfaces are discussed as well as graded activities are matched to end product (e.g., improved web space, oppositional grasp). Specific activities are divided according to age and applied to groups of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children. Descriptions of products, equipment plans, pictures, and complete addresses, including telephone numbers and zip codes, follow in the chapter’s appendix.

There is a chapter on scissor skills with an exceptional assessment to determine handedness. Narrative descriptions of scissor evaluations can be found with diagrams on acquisition/progression of skill. Instructions for teaching scissor use are graded in many novel ways.

The chapter entitled “Neurodevelopmental Treatment for the Young Child” is the best overview of current theory and implementation of activities published to date. Regi Boehme’s work is heavily incorporated, and perceptual input is interwoven in this chapter. The weakness of this section is its dearth of diagrams—only two tables appear in 18 pages of very technical writing. Few evaluations are present; an outline of an assessment used by the authors would have added interest.

The chapter on upper-extremity casting complements the neurodevelopmental treatment section with two comprehensive case studies. In this chapter, the reader will find casting procedures, a wearing schedule, and general precautions. However, the photographs are very grainy and of poor quality. More information on casting application (i.e., amount of padding), preferred materials (i.e., fast/slow set), and further elaboration on the use of casting in making decisions regarding surgery would have been beneficial.

Erhardt’s section on eye-hand coordination reflects her usual well-defined manner of presentation with numerous charts. A 6-page case study organized by systems (e.g., specific sensory mode, eye-hand coordination, purposeful skill) includes photographs matched with treatment activities.

This text is a bargain for the price and the sole reference needed for intermediate and advanced pediatric occupational therapists for hand development. It is not geared toward students or entry-level therapists who should seek out existing texts or seminars that separately cover these topics. It is hoped that the editors will publish a second edition in 5 to 7 years with anticipated advances in hand development.

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Find a Mentor or Be One

Susan C. Robertson, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA (1992). American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., 1383 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD 20849-1725. 31 pp., $8.00 (members), $10.00 (nonmembers).

This monograph presents the concept of mentoring, which has roots...
Sexuality and the Person With Traumatic Brain Injury: A Guide for Families


Sexuality is one area that is not always given the attention it deserves by the brain injury rehabilitation team. There are many reasons for this, ranging from the energy focused on sustaining life to efforts focused on cognition, mobility, and behavior management. Sexuality and the Person With Traumatic Brain Injury: A Guide for Families is designed to help families incorporate sexuality throughout all phases of the recovery process of the person with traumatic brain injury. The first four chapters present an excellent overview of sexual development, brain anatomy and function, types of brain injury, and the recovery process.

The two chapters that focus on neurological impairments relating to sexuality clearly explain cognitive, communicative, perceptual, and motor deficits. In these chapters, the authors describe how each specific impairment will affect the sexuality of the person with traumatic brain injury. In later chapters, the authors instruct the family on how to explore the preinjury sexuality of the person with traumatic brain injury as well as psychosocial aspects that affect sexuality after injury.

This book deals primarily with the scenario of the intact family support system and continuation of preinjury relationships. It offers clear and concise information that is an asset to the family’s understanding of brain injury as well as sexuality.

The chapter on management presents a number of case scenarios. It deals nicely with the single, young adult who did not have a stable, lasting relationship prior to his or her injury. The authors give persons with traumatic brain injury suggestions for increasing social opportunities and dealing with the effects of their injury in relation to their sexuality.

This is also an excellent resource book for professionals treating persons with traumatic brain injury. It provides an overview of brain injury and explains the effects those injuries have on sexuality in each phase of recovery. The feelings and needs of the family during this long process are also discussed. In addition to offering suggestions for addressing sexuality and maladaptive behaviors in the institutional setting, the authors provide thought-provoking information on how community-based programming can assist with the ongoing sexuality of the person with traumatic brain injury.

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Briefly Noted

Effective Documentation for Occupational Therapy


Authoritative information is compiled within this text on documentation. It is presented in 15 chapters, from the expert vantage point of occupational therapy consultants, professors, program managers, and supervisors.

The content is not new. It examines various forms of payment for occupational therapy services and the guidelines and limitations of those sources. Key elements to documentation and effective formats for documentation are reviewed, with case examples adding additional visual learning. Although the text and the case studies are up-to-date, the authors caution that the key elements of occupational therapy documentation are to be determined on a regular basis by each occupational therapy department.

In what way is the written medical record documentation best used for occupational therapy purposes? Readers seeking a response to this question will find the answer in the bulk of this work.

The text addresses specific occupational therapy reports and the medical review process and concentrates on helping therapists reconsider their thoughts about treatment goals. What information is needed by the medical reviewer before providers can be reimbursed for the service? This information is provided in depth and expanded to include special considerations affecting pediatric, home health, and mental health practice. Throughout the book, the reader is shown how to produce desirable documentation results.