IRis

Northeastern University

News@Northeastern

Office of Marketing and Communications

March 31, 2010

2010-03-31: Grant to research child's play

University Communications and Public Relations

Recommended Citation

University Communications and Public Relations, "2010-03-31: Grant to research child's play" (2010). *News@Northeastern.* Paper 549. http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20001792

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

Grant to research child's play

iStock photo

March 31, 2010

Three professors at Northeastern University say there is much more to children's play than dolls and dump trucks, and they have won a four-year $1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to pursue that assertion.

The trio — Karin Lifter, Emanuel Mason, and Takuya Minami of the **Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology** in the **Bouvé College of Health Sciences** — say their research shows that the way children play can provide critical insight into their distinctive methods of learning, which can lead to the development of more effective instructional strategies.

"We think that play is a sixth domain that should be used to round out the traditional five assessment domains specified in federal law for serving children with delays and disabilities," says Lifter, referring to the domains of cognitive development, physical development, communication development, social or emotional development and adaptive development.

The grant will support continued work on a Developmental Play Assessment, originally constructed by Lifter, to create a tool for educators and practitioners to assess children's play skills within the context of determining their broader development.

Delays and limitations in play often correspond with lags in other learning behavior, says Lifter. For example, the ability of a young child to create relationships between toys in a meaningful way, such as reassembling a simple puzzle, directly corresponds to transitions in language, such as the emergence of first words.

As part of the study, researchers will observe approximately 820 children (with and without identified developmental delays) ranging in age from 8 months to 60 months playing with groups of toys in 30-minute sessions that will be recorded and analyzed. Researchers and practitioners participating in the project will place four groups of toys in front of each child to observe, record and code the play behaviors.

The researchers will organize the data into developmental sequences, and identify delays, emerging skills and patterns of play. They will generate a checklist for each child's progress that will act as an instructional guide for future play sessions.

"This is not about teaching children how to play with toys," says Lifter, "but rather using children's play with toys to show us what children know and what they are thinking about in their development."

Archives

The following news stories and features are available. For information about older content, please contact University Communications and Public Relations at (617) 373-5471.

2010

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

Share

Like One like. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

© 2010 Northeastern University · 360 Huntington Ave., Boston, Massachusetts 02115 · 617.373.2000 · TTY 617.373.3768