

BACKGROUND

Near 1800 children are diagnosed with cerebral palsy every year in the UK (NHS 2016). It is recognised that these children often have reduced social engagement, yet socialization plays a fundamental role in children's development. In spite of this need, there are few toys specifically developed for children with cerebral palsy, and even fewer which support peer socialisation.



METHODOLOGY

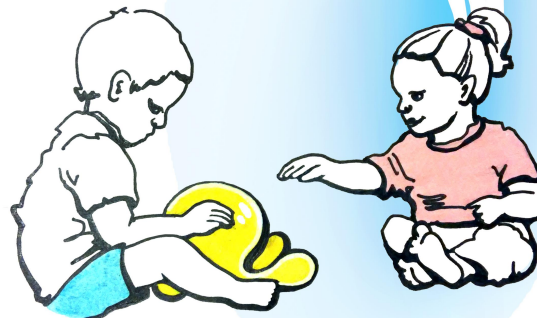
The research is interdisciplinary and combines theoretical investigation with design practice within an action research approach. A child-centred approach was applied with adaptation for the purposes of the study.



This research presents an investigation into designing play equipment for encouraging peer interactions of children with cerebral palsy as a part of developing their social competence.

DESIGN CRITERIA

Based on the analysis of related literature and existing examples of design objects, it is possible to identify criteria which play equipment should have in the context of social development. Design criteria have two levels. The first one is indicators from the design position, and the second one - indicators of purpose (to practice social skills and to foster self-confidence).



EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The research will contribute new understandings of design for relational peer play and will provide a set of design guidelines for this specialist play equipment. It is also aimed at changing social perceptions of cerebral palsy and shifting the accent from limitation to potential and benefit of these children.

DESIGN CONCEPT

The concept of the play equipment in this research is based on the idea of the object-centred sociality (Engeström 2008, Simon 2010), and seen as a trigger for emerging social interactions between children who are involved in the playing process with it.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Engeström, J. (2005) Why some social network services work and others don't — Or: the case for object-centered sociality
Simon, N. (2010). The Participatory Museum
Vygotsky, L. (1978) Mind in society

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