Piecing The Puzzle Together With The Use Of Physical Therapy

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For my Honors Project I decided to create a set of exercise cards for children with autism. The front of each card had a picture symbolizing the exercise/activity, and on the back included directions, supplies and tips to complete the activity. The following is a selection of a few exercise cards from each of the four exercise sections, as well as the title card, table of contents cards, information cards, and source cards.

There are 45 cards included within this ring set. Of these cards, 32 are exercise cards. The front of these cards will have illustrations of the target exercise. The back of each card describes the therapeutic benefits, exercise instructions, tips, and any required materials. The instructions are geared towards the child. The tips are for the adult helping the child.

There are six sections within the set of different colors that include:

.: Pink are information cards
.: Blue are animal activities

Table of Contents

Pink - Information
(7) What is autism?
(8) What causes autism?
(9) What is it like to have autism?
(10 - 11) How does physical therapy help children with autism?

Blue - Animals
(12) Tiger Tag
Orange is sport activities
Purple are competitive activities
Green is arts and crafts activities
Red are source cards

Orange – Sports
(20) Pig In The Mud
(21) Squished Like A Bug
(22) Jungle Dance
(23) Volleyball
(24) Gymnastics
(25) Tumbling
(26) Diving
(27) Basketball
(28) Bowling
(29) Skateboarder
(30) Body Builder
(31) Olympic Trials

Purple – Competition
(32) Clap Until You Can’t
Clap Anymore
(33) Pound Them All Until
They Fall!
(34) Building Block Mania
(35) Don’t Be First; Be Last!
(36) Mimic Me Like A Mime
(37) Spin Until You Drop
(38) Don’t Get Caught Up In
Hot Air
(39) Balance On A Ball; Don’t
Fall!

Green – Arts and Crafts
(40) Sink Your Hands In The
Sand
(41) Flying With The Angles
(42) Squeezing Out A
Masterpiece
(43) Fun With Foam

Red – Sources
(44 – 45)

What is autism?

Common developmental disorder. (4)
Referred to as the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). (4)
Autistic brains function differently to come up with different methods to complete common everyday tasks. (4)
Symptoms can vary based on

What causes autism?

Doctors do not understand the cause behind autism. (2)
Genes from family members as well as environmental factors may play into why children have autism, but studies cannot fully support this belief. (2)
What is it like to have autism?

.: Children with autism may have trouble:
  o Talking to others (4)
  o Sharing thoughts (4)
  o Interacting with others (4)
  o Controlling their behavior (4)
  o Playing with others (4)
  o Relating to others (4)
  o Holding eye contact (4)
  o Staying still (4)
  o Learning/processing new information (4)
  o Showing emotions (4)
  o Completing daily tasks (4)

.: Children with autism will have

How does physical therapy help children with autism?

.: Provides regulated environment. (4)

.: Create a regular routine. (4)

.: Have a schedule that will decrease frustration and increase good behavior. (4)

.: Positive incentives will help children with autism be interested to finish
less muscle tone than other children their age. (4)
∴ Children with autism will be more clumsy than usual. (4)
∴ Children with autism may become frustrated easily. (4)

*The number following the fact in parenthesis is the source the information came from*

∴ Develop motor skills. (9)
∴ Improve muscle tone. (9)
∴ Build coordination. (9)
∴ Improve posture. (9)
∴ Develop a fitness program. (9)

*The number following the fact in parenthesis is the source the information came from*

∴ Help children with autism become familiar and comfortable in their own bodies. (9)
∴ Boosts cognitive function. (1)
∴ Including pictures and examples of an activity helps the autistic child understand the concept before he or she completes it. (5)
∴ Positive reinforcement during the activity and following its’ completion help children with autism feel accomplished. (5)
∴ Exercise activities help children with autism interact with other children with autism as well as individuals without autism. (5)
∴ Movement helps children with autism better communicate. (6)
∴ Helps maintain a healthy weight. (10)
∴ Helps children with autism learn to have fun. (12)
∴ Lets children with autism challenge other individuals. (12)
∴ Allow children with autism to complete challenges other individuals propose to them. (12)
∴ Allow creativity. (12)
∴ Works on expressing emotions. (12)

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Flying Owl

∴ Therapeutic Benefits:
  Physical Movement
  Physical Strength
  Trust
∴ Tips:
  Make sure child holds onto the swing’s ropes.
  Make sure child does not jump off of swing while it is moving.
  May work best if adult pushes child if that method is chosen.
∴ Directions:
  Have child sit on swing and have adult stand behind child to push them as the child kicks his or her feet.
  To make harder, have child kick his or her feet and lean backwards and forwards while pulling on the swing’s ropes by him or herself.
∴ Required Materials:
  Swing set

*Activity based on activity found from Source 3*
Hanging Like A Monkey

Therapeutic Benefits:
- Physical Movement
- Hand - Eye Coordination
- Physical Strength

Tips:
- Monitor child’s movements.

Directions:
- Have the child’s arms at shoulder distance apart.
- Have child hold for 10 seconds.
- To increase the difficulty, have the child take one hand off the bar and reach forward to grab the next bar while swinging like a monkey.
- Continue until the child reaches the end.

Required Materials:
- Playground or other area with monkey bars

*Activity based on activity found from Source 3*

Wiggle Worm

Therapeutic Benefits:
- Physical Movement
- Trust
- Deep Pressure

Tips:
- Ensure child’s head is outside the cushion or exercise mat at all times.

Directions:
- Have the child lay in a cushion or exercise mat with his or her head out.
- Roll the child up into the cushion or exercise mat and have them wiggle like a worm to get out.

Required Materials:
- Cushion or exercise mat

*Activity based on activity found from Source 3*

Volleyball

Therapeutic Benefits:
- Hand - Eye Coordination
- Physical Movement
- Basic Education Skills

Tips:
- Monitor child’s movements.
- Ensure area is safe of materials child could trip on or run into.
- The partner(s) in this activity could be adults or other children.

Directions:
- Blow up balloons of

Diving

Therapeutic Benefits:
- Deep Pressure
- Physical Movement
- Awareness

Tips:
- Monitor child’s movements.
- Ensure area around the jumping area is safe of items that may hurt the child if landed on.

Directions:
- Make a large pile of leaves or pillows.
- Then have the child jump into them like a diver
different colors. Have the child hit it like a volleyball and name the color.

:. Materials:
   Balloons of various colors

*Activity based on activity found from Source 7*

would dive into a pool. Once the child is in the pile, have the child wiggle to get out of the pile.

:. Required Materials:
   Pillows or leaves

*Activity based on activity found from Source 3*

Spin Until You Drop

:. Therapeutic Benefits:
   Physical Movement
   Physical Strength
   Balance Skills

:. Tips:
   Monitor the child’s movements.
   Ensure the area is safe of materials the child may run or bump into.

:. Directions:
   Have the child hold his or her arms out to the side while he or she spins around. Have the child continue to spin around in circles, until the child is unable to spin anymore.

*Activity based on activity found from Source 7*

Balance On A Ball; Don’t Fall!

:. Therapeutic Benefits:
   Physical Strength
   Balance
   Improved Posture
37(117,163),(363,294)

:. Tips:
   Monitor child as he or she balances. Ensure area is safe of items that may hurt the child if landed on. May best be done on a softer surface.

:. Directions:
   Have child sit on ball. Once balance is gained, have child roll back and forth on the ball. To make harder, have child bounce up and down on the ball while rolling back and forth on it.

:. Required Materials:
   Physiotherapy Ball

*Activity based on activity found from Source 3*
Sink Your Hands In The Sand

:: Therapeutic Benefits:
- Creativity
- Hand-Eye Coordination
- Size Recognition

:: Tips:
- May best be done outside.

:: Directions:
- Give the child different sized buckets, pales, and sand wheels to play with.
- Let them create castles or pour the sand into and out of the bucket.

:: Required Materials:
- Sand
- Buckets/pales
- Sand wheels

*Activity based on activity found from Source 7*

Flying With The Angels

:: Therapeutic Benefits:
- Physical Movement
- Basic Education Skills
- Stretching

:: Tips:
- May best be done in sand or snow, but any soft surface will work

:: Directions:
- Have the child lay down and move his or her arms and legs out and back in as far as they go.
- Have the child count how many times he or she moves his or her arms and legs.

:: Required Materials:
- Sand or snow, if that is the preferred method.

*Activity based on activity found from Source 7*

5) Ghani, K., & Kenward, L. (2011). From home to school with autism: How to make inclusion a success. London:
