

# IMPLEMENTED PSYCHOMOTOR ACTIVITY FOR VERY PRE-TERM CHILDREN AGED FROM 18 TO 36 MONTHS.

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## Introduction

- Premature infants are more susceptible to motor development impairment when compared to full term infants<sup>1</sup>.
- The effects of these impairments that are manifested in the long term can be prevented through adapted psychomotor stimulation and early parental guidance.
- In Belgium there is no adapted activity for 1 to 3 yo children
- From this perspective a psychomotor programme has been implemented for very pre-term children aged from 18 to 36 months. The aim of the present study was to validate the project.



## THE IMPLEMENTED PSYCHOMOTOR ACTIVITY

### Objectives of the activity

- Stimulate fundamental motricity and perceptuals according to 1,5 to 3 yo children needs.
- Possibility for individual intervention
- Develop children sociability and autonomy (activity with other children, but without parents)

### Established conditions for activity

#### Staff :

- 1 physical educator → fundamental motricity + perceptuals stimulation
- 1 children physiotherapist → individual intervention
- **Population** : 10 children aged between 20-24 months.
- **Place** : Medium sport hall (20x8m).
- **Equipment** : Heavy equipment from the sport hall (mats, beams, benches) + transportable equipment (balls, building blocs, hoops, ropes, scarfs, frisbee, cones, skateboard, toys, parachute, etc.
- **When** : Wednesday from 4.30 to 5.30 PM
- **Guidelines** :
  - Free games or guided exploration.
  - Structurated activity with rituals : 1) welcome period with parents ; 2) main activity ; 3) return to calm.
  - Familiarization with the process of separation with the parents
- **Price** : ±5€/infant/session

4.30 PM : ARRIVAL + WELCOME WITH PARENTS

4.35 PM : SEPARATION WITH PARENTS => CHILDREN ARE GATHERED IN THE FOAM MATTRESS CORNER

4.40 PM : STARTING OF THE MAIN ACTIVITY

### Physiotherapist individual intervention

5-10 minutes / children

- Balance stimulation
- Postural tone
- Walking stimulation and feet positioning corrections
- Manipulation stimulation

### Constant activities and equipment

- Importance of rituals => constant elements
- Mastress foam corner with imagination and manipulation material (building blocs, musical instruments, toys, fancy dress, scarfs, etc.)
- Gymnastic circuit with beams, benches, triangles mats, gymnastic mats in order to stimulate balance, rolling, climbing, boldness, etc.

### Turning activities and equipment

- For fundamental motricity diversification
- 5 turning activities
  - Balls (different size and form : football, basketball, tennis, betc.aloons etc.)
  - Track and field games (runing, jumping, throwing)
  - Small equipment discovery (balls, scarfs, frisbee, ropes, Asco building blocs, ...)
  - Parachute
  - Skateboard

5.25 PM : RETURN TO CALM : CHILDREN ARE GATHERED IN THE FOAM MATTRESS CORNER

5.30 PM : END OF THE ACTIVITY : RETURN TO PARENTS



## Scientific Validation

### Action-research methodology was used to validate activity

- 1. Reflecting** : Experience + Scientific literature + Experts interviews
- 2. Planning** : Building the implemented activity
- 3. Acting** : Launching the implemented activity
- 4. Analyzing the implemented activity** :
  - ▶ Parents interviews
  - ▶ Experts interviews
  - ▶ Staff observations

They were asked to they give their opinion on the project, to confirm or deny our choices and to make suggestions about the activity
- 5. Improving** :
  - ▶ Sessions with parents need to be included (1s/5s)
  - ▶ Rituals could be improved, especially for return to calm
  - ▶ Parents request more feedback after session
  - ▶ Need to find a more appropriated day and time
  - ▶ Financial support is needed to reduce fees

## Conclusions

- ▶ Most elements of the implemented psychomotor activity were validated by the experts and the parents.
- ▶ Requested changes : introducing sessions with parents, improving rituals, increasing feedbacks to parents
- ▶ However, financial support is needed for this work to be sustained.