

New support options for a changed clientele in the conductive toddler group

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Background

The current Toddler Group of the Phoenix Conductive Centre consists of eight children age 1 to 4 with diverse neurological movement disorders. As the group is very heterogeneous, both in respect of the children's age and the diagnoses, special challenges result for daily conductive, educational and therapeutic work.

In recent years, more and more children with multiple disabilities have attended the group. When sitting, they require more support than a classical Pető chair with bars can offer. As a result, the transdisciplinary team is confronted with new challenges in terms of further development of the Pető chair. The team must now answer the following question: How can we have these children sit independently when participating in situations with big groups at the plinth or at a table while they are eating, drinking, doing handicrafts or taking part in conductive sessions? What does the optimum support for the correction of torso hypotension that can be used to promote the physiological movements of the upper extremities look like?

Our solution

We were unable to find a suitable seat solution for two-year old Ben, who joined our group in the 2013/2014 school year that would permit him to take part independently in social activities at the table. For the parents as well, who intensively accompanied Ben during the settling-in period, it was important to find a solution that met Ben's need for independence and safety at the same time.

Together with Ben's parents, we developed a combination of the tested and proven small Pető spindle-back chair, which promotes the child's activities, and a therapy chair, which offers the torso and head the stability required to sit independently. It was thus that our new "Ben" chair was born in Ben's father's workshop. Numerous parents' wishes and conductors' long years of experience contributed to producing a safe, active chair that corresponds to the principles of conductive education and reduces the amount of aid required in the long-term.

Seeing how happy Ben was when sitting among us prompted us to use the chair for other children in the group as well. More models such as the "Leo" rider's chair were developed in collaboration with the conductive team. In the meantime, the chairs that were developed have entered serial production and are being built in the family-run workshop, **kreativ in holz** – wood creations that make a difference. Today, these chairs offer a safe seat solution for the children in our facility as well as for parents and children in their home.



Development of the "BEN" chair by conductors and parents



"Ben" in the conductive daily routine



Description

The "Ben" chair and its big brother, "Edi", are very practical and mobile active chairs that have been specially developed for children with poor torso and sitting stability. The combination of the support pads with a wedge and a footboard offers our special children a secure, natural and alternative seat option. The different sizes are used for all age groups and offer individual facilitation options as well with special accessories such as a headrest, chest harness, neck cushion, wedge (to support adduction of the lower extremities) and footboard.

Daily routine table

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:45 to 8:30	Children arrive, individual transfer, self-help training free play, stretching				
8:30 to 9:30	Individual transfer to the table Group speech therapy – oral motor function conduction Breakfast - socioemotional education, learning how to eat and drink independently, experiencing rituals				
9:30 to 10:00	Socioemotional education at the morning meeting with a hand learning session				
10:20 to 11:10	Supine learning session with motivation based on the general curriculum	Supine learning session with motivation based on the general curriculum	Sensory learning session	Supine learning session with motivation based on the general curriculum	Individual therapy - physical therapy / weight room
	Playful sensory motor conduction in the group room			Playful sensory motor conduction in the SI-room	Swimming / Snoezelen room
				10:30 - 11:30	Play options with individual guidance + cognitive conduction by educational games
11:15 to 1:50	Individual standing and walking session with handicrafting based on the general curriculum in the garden or group room	Hand learning session - fine motor conduction, handicrafting	Play options with guidance	Individual therapy - physical therapy	Individual therapy - physical therapy
		Individual therapy - physical therapy			
11:50 to 12:30	Lunch with therapeutic support and conduction for oral motor function Personal hygiene and developing physical maturation processes				
12:30 to 2:00	Break with the option of a nap or free play, conclusion, self-help training, departure				

Conclusion

The team noticed that the chair provided an adequate support option. All of the children can sit together at a table, they are better able to concentrate on interactions, carry out tasks involving fine motor function and independently and actively participate in the group's activities.

At the same time, the chair ensures the optimal stimulation situation for ADL training (eating, drinking). First year, we are considering expanding the concept to enable the Workshop employees working in other areas to be able to take part in the conductive therapeutic learning sessions as well. The system of programs alongside work in workshops (ABA) may be useful in this context.

The "Ben" chair is used in diverse modules in the daily routine of our conductive groups