

**Building blocks of Occupational Therapy as an emerging profession: using a consulting-educator model to address sensory and occupational deprivation in institutionalized children with disabilities. (Cost-effective tools and models of success that can be replicated to promote occupational justice in a country where professional occupational therapy services are not available)**

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**Introduction:** Occupational and sensory deprivation in institutionalized children with profound developmental delays are not addressed in many orphanages of Ukraine due to economic reasons and lack of qualified therapists.

**Objectives:** Our goal is to demonstrate how occupational therapy can positively influence quality of life of institutionalized individuals using a consulting-educator model.

**Method:** A sensory-based play protocol was designed by an occupational therapist to address self-injurious and aggressive behaviors in four children. Two orphanage staff received training, resources and guidance to carry-out the protocol. Subsequently, three orphanage volunteers received training from the occupational therapist to address sensory and occupational deprivation in 16 children in a year-long intensive interaction project. An assessment tool was designed specifically for the project to evaluate children's functional skills before and after its implementation.

**Results:** Following a three-month intervention carried out by orphanage staff, all four children demonstrated new object manipulation skills, three of the four demonstrated decrease in self-injurious and aggressive behaviors and improved social interaction with the staff. Similarly, in intensive interaction project carried out by volunteers all 16 children demonstrated significant functional gains in domains of sensory reactions, social, motor, play and self-care skills.

**Conclusion:** Sensory stimulation and occupational engagement lead to functional gains and improvement in quality of life in institutionalized children with profound developmental delays, also decreasing burden of care. Occupational therapists can benefit public institutions and promote health and well-being of individuals experiencing occupational injustice using task-specific training, guidance and supervision to other professional and volunteer staff.