

The Meaning of Children's Favorite Play, based on Analysis of a Case

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Introduction : Children's play is important for occupational therapy with children. However, children's play has been mainly investigated based on observation, and not many studies have adopted children's own expressions. Therefore, we investigated a child's play based on her verbal expression.

Objectives : This study aimed to investigate the meaning of children's favorite solitary play.

Methods : A healthy nine-year-old girl was selected as the subject, since the frequency of solitary play increases in girls of this age, and their language is developed to the point at which they can converse and express their internal emotions. The semi-structured interview was performed and the matters to be analyzed were selected based on the interview guidance as follows: (1) the subject's feeling during play and (2) the effect of play on the subject herself. For the analysis, a verbatim record was created, and three researchers qualitatively discussed this verbatim record. In addition, information about the subject's ordinary appearance during play was obtained from her parents and used in the discussion.

Results : In the discussion, it was pointed out that since the subject did not easily decide her own favorite play and display her feeling, her actual favorite play might differ from that obtained from her parents. It was also suggested that a difference might exist in favorite play between the subject and other girls. Regarding the analytical result, the subject expressed interest in many cases concerning matter (1) above and themes related to self-control. Comments such as "although I failed in the game, it is very interesting," "I can move the doll," and "I myself make up the rule," were extracted from the subject. As for matter (2), the subject addressed her self-competence in expressions such as "I can feel I am strong" when she achieved the task.

Conclusion : Self-control and self-competence had been revealed as the factors of play in previous studies, and they were expressed by the subject in this study. However, the range of the subject's expressions was limited in this study. Therefore, how to collect data and how to select subjects must be examined in the future.