

Uys, C. J. E. (2002). *The validation of a play package to facilitate the development of communication related skills*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa. Erna Alant (Advisor): 156 pages of text, 215 references, 7 appendices, 43 tables, and 14 figures.

The needs of the severely disabled, especially in communities where there is a paucity of professional person power, inspired this research aiming at the validation of a play package consisting of a daily multiple measurement instrument and a package of play activities for the facilitation of communication related behaviours. This intervention programme is based on scientific theories and research findings about sensorimotor, cognitive, communication and social-emotional development, as well as play as a facilitator of childhood development. A model for the development of communication related behaviours as adaptive responses is put forward, from which observable and measurable behaviour indicators were identified, through a process of operationalisation. An authentic multiple measurement instrument was developed and the package of play activities for the facilitation of these behaviours was refined. In a pre-experimental phase these tools were tested for reliability and face and content validity using experts to evaluate the scope and grading of the behavioural indicators, the application of the play package and audiovisual recordings of the measurements by the researcher during two pilot studies. During the experimental phase construct and convergent validity were investigated. Data was collected from five intellectually impaired participants over an eight week period of pre-intervention measurements, treatment, post-intervention measurements, withdrawal, and post-withdrawal measurements. Once again external raters were used to ensure reliability. Three other authentic measurement instruments (one of these as a counter measure) were used to investigate convergent validity. Based on the outcomes the daily multiple measurement instrument and the package of play activities proved to have face, content, construct and convergent validity, thus proving that the daily multiple measurement instrument measures the behaviours that it claims to measure, and the package of play activities facilitates the communication related behaviours that it claims to facilitate. A valid and reliable play package, catering for the individual needs of the heterogeneous population, has thus been established that can be applied by any member of a transdisciplinary team (including caregivers and parents), thus alleviating the burden on a handful of professional therapists who cannot cope with the needs of the large population of severely disabled children.