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# Recreation with a purpose

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RECREATION WITH A PURPOSE

by

Elaine A. Bilot

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A RESEARCH PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION  
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This research paper has been  
approved for the Graduate Committee  
of the Cardinal Stritch College by

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## Chapter I

### What's The Recreation Scene?

#### Introduction

Summer Day Recreational Programs for the learning disabled youths: Does this type of activity exist? What does research have to say? Recreational activities for this population may show constructive and transferable skills. Benefits from this exposure may include social, motor and academic improvement.

To aid in the research of constructive recreation, this paper will also attempt to focus on the data available on recreation programs for the mentally retarded youth.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the availability of programs for the learning disabled in the area of recreation designed for their needs. This study attempted to show what research has been reported pertaining to day recreational programs for the learning disabled youths ranging in age from five years to fifteen years of age.

This study also attempted to show research available pertaining to recreation programs for mentally retarded youths ranging in age from five years to fifteen years.

### Scope

This research was limited to the last thirteen years of publications.

### Definitions

Terms used in this research paper were defined as follows:

Learning Disability was defined by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children in their annual report to Congress in 1968 as, "Children with special learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written languages. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, writing, talking, reading, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage."

Day Recreational Programs are continuous programs where no overnight lodging is required for the participant in the program.

A Youth is a male or female ranging in age from five years to fifteen years.

Mentally Retarded was defined by the American Association on Mental Deficiency in 1961 as "subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior."

Summary

This paper was an attempt to investigate the need for summer day recreational programs for the learning disabled youths, these programs being specifically designed for learning disabled youth ranging in age from five years to fifteen years. This study also attempted to investigate the recreation programs available for mentally retarded youths. Day recreational programs are those that require no overnight lodging. The definition used in this study for learning disabilities is that which was accepted by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children in 1968. The definition used for the mentally retarded was accepted in 1961 by the American Association on Mental Deficiency. The past thirteen years served as the limitations on research for this paper.



## Chapter II

### A Perspective On Recreation

Research in the area of recreation for the mentally retarded dates back to 1965. Eunice Kennedy Shriver<sup>1</sup> wrote the article, "Recreation for the Mentally Retarded," which presented the need for recreation for this exceptional population. The article stated that mentally retarded youths showed gains in I.Q. from physical activities and from competitive sports. Eunice Kennedy Shriver wrote that there was a definite need for physical activity for the mentally retarded youths. She also included appropriate ways to obtain funding for recreational programs.

Genevieve Painter<sup>2</sup> reported on the camp programs sponsored by the Kennedy Foundation in the report "Psychological Analysis of Camp Activities in Selected Kennedy Foundation Sponsored Camps for the Mentally Retarded" in

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<sup>1</sup>Eunice Kennedy Shriver, "Recreation for the Mentally Retarded," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Volume 36, #5, (May 1965) Pages 16-18 and 55.

<sup>2</sup>Genevieve Painter, "Psychological Analysis of Camp Activities in Selected Kennedy Foundation Sponsored Camps for the Mentally Retarded" (1965) ED016314

1965. The report analyzed six of the twenty-six camps that were funded by the Kennedy Foundation. They investigated twenty-five activities that were common to all the camps. The findings showed that the camp experience stimulated many different input and output channels.

Julian Stein<sup>1</sup> in "The Potential of Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded Child" reported that two studies showed dramatic improvement for the mentally retarded individual in athletic achievement, physical strength and fitness. Significant changes in emotional stability, medical evaluation and personal adjustment were also gained. The individuals in the studies participated in physical education, individual remedial exercises, strengthening activities and recreative team games.

In the study "Recreation and Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded,"<sup>2</sup> it was reported that through recreation and play great gains were achieved. Gains were noted in physical well being, redirection of drives, guidance in emotional development, reshaping of habit patterns and the establishment of socially acceptable attitudes. Other gains were noted in a higher level of social maturity and also a

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<sup>1</sup>Julian U. Stein, "The Potential of Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded Child," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Volume 37, #4, (April 1966) Pages 25-28.

<sup>2</sup>Council for Exceptional Children, "Recreation and Physical Activity for Mentally Retarded," (1966) ED017088.

greater feeling of personal satisfaction.

The reports compiled in the book, Physical Education and Recreation for Impaired, Disabled, and Handicapped Individuals---Past, Present and Future<sup>1</sup> presented many different facts. The integration of the exceptional population with the normal population was reported to have possible good effects given with the right foundation. This would include possible pre-teaching of activities to insure more effective integration and also a positive self-concept for the exceptional population.

Another report listed by Walter Cooper<sup>2</sup> stressed the need for goal orientation when dealing with the exceptional population. The goals must be listed for both staff and campers to provide a beneficial experience. The book also states that the motor abilities of the mentally retarded are within the normal curve of motor development. According to the book, many gains result from physical activity. These gains included an increase in self-concept, greater vocational productivity, an improvement in a variety of speech impairments and a help in dealing with everyday life.

Thomas Vodla<sup>3</sup> stressed the need for prescriptive

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<sup>1</sup>Dolores M. Geddes and Wanda L. Burnette, Physical Education and Recreation for Impaired Disabled, and Handicapped Individuals...Past, Present, and Future, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Washington, D.C. Information and Research Utilization Center, (1975) ED119396

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Report by Walter E. Cooper, Page 51 ED119396

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Thomas Vodla, Page 317 ED119396

physical education for the exceptional population to enhance the individual.

Bruce Baker's<sup>1</sup> report, "Camp Freedom: Behavior Modification for Retarded Children in a Therapeutic Camp Setting," included forty subjects. The mentally retarded children ranged in age from five years to fifteen years of age. Twenty-five mentally retarded youths participated in the Camp Freedom program. Fifteen of the original forty subjects remained at home and received home instructions. Behaviors that were listed as a high priority for improvement were worked on. These included outbursts, cooperation, writing, speech clarity, etc. Significant improvement in behavior was noted for those attending Camp Freedom.

To aid in the physical development of youth, Harold Jack<sup>2</sup> wrote Physical Activities for Mentally and Emotionally Handicapped Children. This includes over two hundred activities to enhance the development of a child. The activities listed range from simple to more complex motor demands.

For those interested in obtaining monies for recreation for exceptional youth a catalog is available

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce L. Baker, "Camp Freedom: Behavior Modification for Retarded Children In a Therapeutic Camp Setting," American Journal Orthopsychiat 43 (3), (April 1973) Pages 418-427.

<sup>2</sup>Harold K. Jack and Leon E. Johnson, Physical Activities for Mentally and Emotionally Handicapped Children, (1971) Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., ED117876.

entitled A Catalog of Federal Assistance Relating to Recreation and Physical Education for the Handicapped.<sup>1</sup> Information is also provided for improvement in programing and also ways in which to propose recreational programing.

On the local level the United Association for Retarded Citizens<sup>2</sup> offers a listing of recreation programs available for the mentally retarded. The listing is updated each spring to assure maximum recreational program inclusion.

This represents the material available on recreation programs for the mentally retarded youths.

The next portion of this chapter covers recreation programs available for the learning disabled youths.

Research in the area of recreation programs specifically designed for the learning disabled youth seems to be at a minimum. There are few pieces of literature that deal with any area of recreation for the learning disabled youth.

The Association for Children with Learning Disabilities<sup>3</sup> in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania produced A Directory of

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<sup>1</sup>Karen Littman, A Catalog of Federal Assistance Relating to Recreation and Physical Education for the Handicapped, (July 1973) ED092492.

<sup>2</sup>Jeff Percival, United Association for Retarded Citizens Representative, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Interview April 6, 1978.

<sup>3</sup>Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, A Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, (1970) ED041436

Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities in 1970. This particular material is informative to all parents interested in any form of recreation for their learning disabled youth. This directory lists in detail those necessary attributes a recreational facility servicing learning disabled youth should demonstrate, the qualifications of the person in charge of the facility, and also the staff working with learning disabled youth. A basic consideration is the general setup of the facility itself as well as the ratio of staff to the learning disabled population. Another concern in looking for a proper situation for learning disabled youth is whether the facilities' primary orientation is to servicing learning disabled youths or another exceptional population. The program setup specifically for a learning disabled youth may better serve the needs of that youth, than a program servicing many different exceptional populations.

The orientation to one school of thought may also present some problem for learning disabled youth. It may be an advantage to choose a facility that uses the best from all areas of thought to enhance a learning disabled youth's growth.

This Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities<sup>1</sup> was primarily written for parents looking for overnight camp settings. However, many of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

qualifications of a good facility providing day services should be congruent.

The New Jersey Association for Brain Injured Children<sup>1</sup> in 1966 published Recreation and Socialization for Brain Injured Children. This literature presents many facets of a summer day camp program for learning disabled youths.

The program consisted of thirty-five learning disabled youths. The goals of the program were as follows: (1) the promotion of coordination and perceptual-motor skills; (2) the development of body control; (3) the opportunity for socialization to occur through group activity; and (4) the development of a better self-concept and a more adequate feeling of self worth. This facility was staffed by professional people dealing with exceptional children throughout the school year. The staff included psychologists, teachers and students in college who were well into their career. The games and activities used in this setting are presented in the literature. This particular program also provided counseling for the parents of the learning disabled youth. The program used Getman's and Kephart's philosophies for many of their orientations to tasks.

According to the literature many significant gains were earned by the learning disabled youths participating

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<sup>1</sup>Sol Gordon, PhD and Risa S. Golub, MA, Editors, Recreation and Socialization for Brain Injured Children, (East Orange, N.J.: New Jersey Association for Brain Injured Children, 1966) ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED017103.

in the program.

The Journal of Learning Disabilities<sup>1</sup> provided an article, "Prescriptive Teaching in a Summer Learning Disabilities Program," which was a program that dealt with modifying behavior. The program was designed for learning disabled youths participating in a six week summer session setting. This program shaped behavior toward academic growth.

Bryant Cratty<sup>2</sup> in 1970 wrote "The Effects of a Program of Learning Games Upon Selected Academic Abilities in Children with Learning Disabilities" in which he listed many gains from constructive games. The improvements from the learning games included behavior, motor ability, and also a gain in functioning level. The report showed significant gains for persons in the learning game program when compared to the control group. The total student population was one hundred twenty-six individuals.

The preceding information was gathered through literature. In order to investigate the programs available in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the learning disabled youth, contacts were made to the local Association for Children

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<sup>1</sup>David A. Sabatino, "Prescriptive Teaching in a Summer Learning Disabilities Program," Journal of Learning Disabilities, Volume 3, #4, (April 1970) Pages 220-227.

<sup>2</sup>Bryant J. Cratty and Sister Margaret Mary Martin, "The Effects of a Program of Learning Games Upon Selected Academic Abilities in Children with Learning Disabilities," (September 1970) EDO44863.



with Learning Disabilities, Richard Schild<sup>1</sup> - representing a source from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, and Gloria Hoefft<sup>2</sup> - representing Milwaukee Public Schools' Recreation Division. The results of the investigation were as follows:

Milwaukee Public Schools offers a developmental recreation program, which includes all areas of the exceptional population. The groupings of youth are done according to abilities as well as age. The summer session for the program is six weeks in length, and it is a half day program with the exception of one program site being an all day program.

According to Barbara Rock,<sup>3</sup> a representative of the local Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, the Y.M.C.A. offers a summer program which will accept learning disabled youth if advance notification is given of the youth's needs. The program offered by the Y.M.C.A. has been a very successful experience for the learning disabled youths who have participated in it.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Schild, Associated with the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Interview December 8, 1977.

<sup>2</sup>Gloria Hoefft, Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Interview December 6, 1977.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara Rock, Association for Child with Learning Disabilities Representative, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Interview December 7, 1977.

The above information, although limited, demonstrates the availability of recreation programs for the learning disabled youth.

## Chapter III

### Summation And A Possible Conclusion

The information available on recreation programs for the exceptional population seemed to be in need of further investigation. This appeared to be an area of the exceptional child which researchers have left for a new horizon.

Recreation for the mentally retarded appeared to have more information available on recreative benefits. Eunice Kennedy Shriver<sup>1</sup> in 1965 wrote an article, "Recreation for the Mentally Retarded," which had urged people to support the recreation programs for the mentally retarded. She listed a benefit from two studies which was I.Q. improvement. It is felt that this I.Q. improvement should be taken with a grain of salt. It could have been true, that a gain had occurred in motoric ability which raised the functioning level of the given tests.

The report "Psychological Analysis of Camp Activities

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<sup>1</sup>Eunice Kennedy Shriver, "Recreation for the Mentally Retarded," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Volume 36, #5, (May 1965) Pages 16-18 and 55.

in Selected Kennedy Foundation Sponsored Camps for the Mentally Retarded" by Genevieve Painter<sup>1</sup> found many activities useful in increasing an individual's development. The camp experience required many tasks to be performed in a variety of ways and with a variety of responses.

Two studies, "The Potential of Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded Child"<sup>2</sup> and "Recreation and Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded,"<sup>3</sup> both reported many similar gains for the mentally retarded. The benefits were listed as improvement in athletic achievement, physical strength, emotional development and personal adjustment. Both reports showed the possible effects exposure to a constructive recreation program may have.

The reports listed in the book Physical Education and Recreation for Impaired, Disabled, and Handicapped Individuals...Past, Present and Future,<sup>4</sup> presented a variety of

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<sup>1</sup>Genevieve Painter, "Psychological Analysis of Camp Activities in Selected Kennedy Foundation Sponsored Camps for the Mentally Retarded" (1965) ED016314.

<sup>2</sup>Julian U. Stein, "The Potential of Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded Child," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Volume 37, #4, (April 1966) Pages 25-28.

<sup>3</sup>Council for Exceptional Children, "Recreation and Physical Activity for the Mentally Retarded," (1966) ED017088.

<sup>4</sup>Dolores M. Geddes and Wanda L. Burnette, Physical Education and Recreation for Impaired Disabled, and Handicapped Individuals...Past, Present, and Future, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Washington, D.C. Information and Research Utilization Center, (1975) ED119396.

information on recreation and physical education. One important area that was covered concerned mainstreaming the exceptional population with the normal population. Important consideration was given to preparation of the exceptional population prior to mainstreaming to promote self-concept and success. The report written by Walter Cooper<sup>1</sup> stressed the need for goal orientation for campers and staff. Positive results from physical activities listed in the book included an increase in self-concept, greater vocational productivity, an improvement in a variety of speech impairments and a help in dealing with everyday life. Thomas Vodla<sup>2</sup> stressed the need for prescriptive physical recreation for the exceptional population in the book. Vodla stated that prescriptive physical education enhanced the individual's ability.

"Camp Freedom: Behavior Modification for Retarded Children in a Therapeutic Camp Setting" by Bruce Baker<sup>3</sup> reported significant improvement in behavior for those that attended Camp Freedom. High priority behaviors that were important to the campers' parents were worked on.

For people seeking to fund a recreation program

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Report by Walter E. Cooper, Page 51 ED119396.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Thomas Vodla, Page 317 ED119396.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce L. Baker, "Camp Freedom: Behavior Modification for Retarded Children In a Therapeutic Camp Setting," American Journal Orthopsychiat 43 (3), (April 1973) Pages 418-427.

for the exceptional population a helpful reference would be "A Catalog of Federal Assistance Relating to Recreation and Physical Education for the Handicapped."<sup>1</sup>

The United Association for Retarded Citizens<sup>2</sup> prepares a listing of recreation programs for the mentally retarded each spring. This would be a great place for parents to start looking for an appropriate program for their child.

There appeared to be sufficient evidence supporting the possible good effects a constructive recreation program for the mentally retarded can have for a youth needing this service. However, a more valid and constructive analysis of the exact benefits of a constructive recreation program still need to be measured. It is felt that exposure to any constructive recreation program for the mentally retarded may give the individual that something extra he or she may need.

From the material available on summer day camp recreation for learning disabled youths, it appears that there is a need for more programs as well as literature on the programs and their possible benefits.

Parents can be directed to what is significant to

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<sup>1</sup>Karen Littman, A Catalog of Federal Assistance Relating to Recreation and Physical Education for the Handicapped, (July 1973) ED092492.

<sup>2</sup>Jeff Percival, United Association for Retarded Citizens Representative, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Interview April 6, 1978.

look for in a learning disability recreation program in the literature presented by the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Association for Children with Learning Disabilities<sup>1</sup> entitled A Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities published in 1970. This directory shows the necessary items to be considered when placing a learning disabled youth into a program that would be of most benefit to the learning disabled youth.

The New Jersey Association for Brain Injured Children<sup>2</sup> published Recreation and Socialization for Brain Injured Children in 1966. This literature would be of great value to the sponsors of a summer recreation program for the learning disabled youths, as well as to the parents. There is a significant amount of information to be read and evaluated in terms of programing for a learning disabled youth population. This research shows many opinions on recreation for the learning youth as well as a section on parent counseling. There were significant gains by the disabled youths participating in this summer day camp facility.

Research into our local summer day camp facilities

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<sup>1</sup>Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, A Directory of Summer Camps for Children with Learning Disabilities, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, (1970) EDO41436.

<sup>2</sup>Sol Gordon, PhD and Risa S. Golub, MA, Editors, Recreation and Socialization for Brain Injured Children, (East Orange, N.J.: New Jersey Association for Brain Injured Children, 1966) ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED017103.

for learning disabled youths shows that there are no programs specifically designed for the learning disabled youth.

There are two options open to the learning disabled youth for summer recreation. These are: (1) the program offered by the Milwaukee Public Schools, and (2) the program offered by the Y.M.C.A. with the advance notification of a learning disabled youth's needs. It is a necessity that parents guiding a learning disabled youth into a summer recreation program thoroughly investigate the program before placing a learning disabled youth into it.

In conclusion, it is felt that summer day recreation programs may enhance self-concept as well as the learning disabled youth's ability to deal with his or her world. An appropriate quote comes from the literature of Recreation and Socialization for Brain Injured Children<sup>1</sup> which states, "If we can learn to see the child's world as he sees it, we can guide and assist him to visually interpret more of the world - and a more complete and productive child - will result, regardless of his diagnostic label." This could be interpreted to mean that we should give any child the opportunity to participate in as many forms of learning situations as possible, because this may effectively enhance the youth's world and knowledge. This youth is the most important resource the world has to gain.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



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