

Occupational Therapy at HOPE Cape Town

Children with HIV have been known to have difficulties in most developmental areas including motor skills, language, cognition and socio-emotional development. ARV treatment has meant these children now have an almost certain prospect of surviving beyond childhood and living a long life. However the risks of developmental delay and encephalopathy remain. In South Africa, often the children have to contend with additional circumstantial factors affecting their health and wellbeing while growing up, despite being on life-saving ART.

Because of the critical early developmental challenges children with HIV face the provision of rehabilitation services is a necessity. Occupational therapists have the knowledge and skills to address the developmental, learning, self-care and play skills. The complex combination of problems faced by children with HIV and their caregivers pose great risks to their meaningful engagement in occupations.

Occupational therapists from HOPE Cape Town provide caregivers and children with opportunities to improve the quality of their children's lives and foster their development, play, self-care and learning.



Occupational therapy clinics are currently provided alongside the paediatric ARV clinics at Delft CHC, Delft South Clinic, TC Newman CDC (in Paarl), and Helderberg Hospital IDC (in Somerset West).



An occupational therapy service is also provided at the Blikkiesdorp Playgroup – to assess the children’s development, provide additional developmental stimulation activity groups to ensure school readiness, and to refer any children needing additional assessment and support.

HOPE Cape Town occupational therapy is fortunate to be able to team up with therapists from the Sensory Kidzone practice (<https://www.facebook.com/sensorykidzone/>) to support children attending the Tygerberg Hospital Pre-school (for children with neurodevelopmental delays and movement coordination disorders) and provide occupational therapy during school hours to the children. A HOPE occupational therapist also helps in the assessment process for these children attending the Neurodevelopmental Clinic at Tygerberg Hospital.

GOKidz

GOKidz (Guiding Opportunities for Kids) is a play-informed, caregiver-implemented, home-based occupational therapy intervention program. It has been designed by occupational therapists for children living with HIV and is currently being used by HOPE therapists working in the ARV clinics.



GOKidz aims to empower caregivers of HIV positive children to promote the pre- numeracy and pre- literacy skills, development, playfulness and self-care of their children. There is a strong focus on transferring knowledge to caregivers about the ways in which the occupations of play, learning and development progress in their children, providing key guidelines as to how to observe the progression of these occupations and how to use activities and daily routines to promote success in these occupations.

The 10-session program is provided in three different age groups (0-2 years old – Toddler, 3-5 years old – Pre-school, 6-8 years old – Foundation Phase) and covers various topics aligned with the developmental, play, learning, self-care and pre numeracy and pre literacy expectations of each age group.



The caregivers are also given a GO box with toys and stimulation items to allow them to carry out the activities used in the sessions at home.

For more information about GOKidz: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14473828.2017.1375068>

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