

Rethinking Physical Therapy

for infants and young children

October is National Physical Therapy Month. We begin this month by shining a light on aspects of Early Intervention PT that are worth rethinking.

Toy Bags

The days when pediatric PTs collected stomp rockets and therapy balls in their trunks can and should be in the past. Context is important, and PTs should use the materials a family already has whenever possible.

How do toys you bring to homes impact a family's confidence in their own resources and abilities?

Exercise

Fitness and movement are important, but the traditional "3 sets of 10" is increasingly out of date in pediatric PT. Children need the opportunity to practice new movements with purpose and throughout their daily lives...decontextualized therapy is not enough.

How does performing "exercise" with young children help them succeed during day-to-day activities with family?

Success

There is nothing quite like helping a child take her first steps, drive his first chair, or take her first bottle. As therapists, we love having the satisfaction of helping children achieve milestones, but we often miss the opportunity to help parents facilitate these big moments with their children.

How does A PT's presence in a child's life impact his parents' confidence and enjoyment of their child?



Walking

For many children, walking is a functional way to get from place to place, but for some children walking is a painful, frustrating task. PTs who focus on outcomes related to walking for children with more complex disabilities overlook the powerful impact of other forms of independent mobility on children's independence.

How does a focus on walking impact the confidence and self esteem of children with complex disabilities and their families?