



 DUNEDIN HOSPITAL

 GREAT KING STREET, DUNEDIN
 NEW ZEALAND


 PAEDIATRIC

Department

8th March, 1976

Mrs J. Hudson,
 Vera Hayward Clinic,
DUNEDIN HOSPITAL.

Dear Mrs Hudson,

Re: Toy Library

In recent years the Paediatric Department has been making strenuous efforts to supply more practical assistance for the very young child who is experiencing developmental delay. I refer to children mainly under three years of age, and certainly less than five years. Some of the children have physical and/or intellectual handicaps, and others are slow with developmental milestones due to lack of experience or opportunity.

A year ago the Vera Hayward Clinic for Special Children was opened. The clinic is thriving and the workload seems to be increasing. Unfortunately, quite a number of children who would benefit from the activities of the clinic live in areas too remote to permit them attending. Our visiting physiotherapist is able to see some of the out-of-town physically handicapped children in their homes at regular intervals and, where appropriate, our play therapist has accompanied her. The needs of this group of children prompted us to consider the establishment of a Toy Library.

With the gathering of information about toy libraries and further consideration, it has become apparent that this facility could profitably be used by a wider range of children. Handicapped children, wherever they live, are unable to explore and experiment the way normal youngsters do. The right play material can do a lot to make up for this - encouraging their imagination, teaching them skills and helping them to become involved socially with other people. The children need a great variety of play materials and this can become expensive and beyond the financial means of parents. The ability to borrow toys would aid this situation. Children also tend to take more notice of a toy if it is reborrowed after several weeks than if it has been around all the time. For children suffering environmental deprivation, the regular introduction of pleasure-giving and educational toys has obvious advantages.

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A Toy Library can also provide a continuing opportunity to help and advise parents on how to assist their children in play activities.

We feel fairly confident that we should be able to find the finance necessary for the Toy Library. Initially its use would be mainly confined to preschool-aged children with developmental delay from any cause. The library could at least, in its early stages, be housed in the Hayward Clinic.

At this time we would greatly appreciate your reaction to this idea of a Toy Library. In particular we would like to know if you think the idea has merit and, if so, if you have any suggestions regarding the types of children for which it should cater, its organization and financing.

Yours sincerely,



P.M. Buckfield
PAEDIATRICIAN