

## **Proposed Program Based on Art Therapy Through Applications in Handicrafts to Develop Manual and Social Skills for Children with Down syndrome**

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### **Research background:**

The societies interest in raising, educating and rehabilitating individuals with special needs is increasing, therefore they affirmed their right to integrate into the various activities of society, and prepared programs for the prevention of disability and help them in developing their abilities, achieve themselves and raise the level of their adaptation to the maximum possible degree, the importance of the current research appears in the benefit from handicrafts that are characterized by the diversity of their raw materials, which enable the child to express himself through them, to have self-esteem, and communicate with those around him without the need to reveal what is inside him in words, It develops physical and manual skills, motor functions, and the development of the forces of coordination and sensory-motor synergy, the research relied on the descriptive-analytical approach in the theoretical framework by studying the mental, physical and psychological features of Down syndrome, it presented art therapy and its relation to the field of handicrafts through the various materials that can be used, It relied on the semi-experimental approach in the practical framework by designing a proposed program to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome -simple mental retardation- in the age (9-12 years),the research problem is that the child with Down syndrome has difficulty in adapting as a result of his weak .

Therefore art therapy is a mixture, compound of fine art with its various activities through which one expresses his inner experiences and the repressed materials that cause his problems and disorders on the one hand, and psychotherapy, which aims to identify those experiences and potentialities on the other hand, so art therapy aims to bring a kind of positive change in the personality, and to help the individual deal with trauma in a positive way instead of just venting about it.

There are many artistic fields that can be used in art therapy practices, starting from expression with drawing and colors, to the use of different materials and stereoscopic expression, A group of malleable materials of bright and varied colors that are suitable for children at this stage, such as (satin and organza ribbons - colored foam strips - colored paper - newspaper and magazine papers - ceramic dough), The researcher also chose a set of simple technical methods that suit the nature of the target group, According to the nature of each material

### **Keywords:**

proposed program - Down syndrome - art therapy - handicrafts - manual skills.

**Research problem:**

What a child with Down syndrome faces of difficulties in social adjustment due to his difference from his peers due to the physical features that distinguish him from others, in addition to the weakness and slackness of his muscles leads to a deficiency in his manual skills, which contributes to his weak self-esteem, and through the researcher's work in the field of Artistic works The necessity of having programs to develop the manual and social skills of these children through art therapy practices that depend on applications in the field of handicrafts, because this field is rich in malleable materials that can be benefited from its plastic and technical capabilities, which are commensurate with the nature of children with Down syndrome, so the research problem can be summarized in the following question:

- Can a proposed program based on art therapy be designed through applications in handicrafts to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome?

**Research Objectives:** The current research aims to:

- Designing a proposed program based on art therapy through applications in handicrafts to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome.
- Introducing the nature of art therapy and its practices and their relationship to the field of handicrafts.
- A presentation of the concept of handicrafts and raw materials that can be used in the current research.
- The research is concerned with shedding light on the characteristics of Down syndrome from all its physical, mental, psychological and social aspects.
- Shedding light on the importance of early intervention in developing social and manual skills for children with Down syndrome.

**The importance of the research:** The importance of the current research is shown through the following:

The Interest in art therapy concept and practices, Linking art therapy practices to the field of handicrafts, giving attention to the category of children with Down syndrome through a presentation of the syndrome concept , and the emergence of the concept and the physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics of this categorym, Shedding light on the importance of early intervention and integrating children with Down syndrome into social activities, Emphasizing the ability of children with Down syndrome to acquire manual skills through activities in handicrafts, Choosing a group of brightly colored and malleable materials that are easy to shape, to be the basis for the handicrafts activities in the current research, Shed light on a set of technical methods that can be applied to the materials in this research, and select a group of simple technical methods that are appropriate to the nature of each material used to be included in the program.

**Research hypotheses:** The researcher assumes the following:

- A proposed program based on art therapy can be designed through applications in handicrafts to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome.

- The applications of handicrafts using a range of materials such as (satin and organza ribbons - colored foam strips - colored paper - newspaper and magazine papers - ceramic dough) can be used as an art therapy practice to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome.

### **search limits:**

The current research is limited to the category of children with Down syndrome (simple mental retardation), whose intelligence level ranges between (50-70 IQ) with a chronological age of ( 9-12 )years, The research is limited to benefit from the practices of art therapy through applications in handicrafts using the following materials: (satin and organza ribbons - colored foam strips - colored paper - newspapers and magazines papers - ceramic dough) according to the proposed program design.

### **Research Methodology:**

The researcher follows the descriptive analytical approach in the theoretical framework and the semi-experimental approach in the applied framework of the research by designing a proposed program based on art therapy through applications in handicrafts to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome, (simple mental retardation), whose intelligence level ranges between (50-70 IQ) with a chronological age of ( 9-12 )years.

### **research tools:**

- A proposed program based on art therapy through applications in handicrafts to develop manual and social skills for children with Down syndrome, presented to a group of specialists in the educational and technical field for evaluation.
- A note card for the performance of the child with Down syndrome (simple mental retardation) in applying the appropriate technical methods for the material used in the handicrafts.
- A note card for the performance of the child with Down syndrome (simple mental retardation) in cooperating with his colleagues while using the available materials while carrying out his work.
- An arbitration form for art therapy practices using the handicrafts applications which included in the program.

**Research steps:** the theoretical framework: It is based on the descriptive analytical approach through the following:

1. Presentation of the concept of art therapy, its practices and its relationship to handicrafts.
2. Presentation of the concept of handicrafts and its applications through the selected materials in the research.
3. The nature of Down syndrome and the characteristics of the syndrome in all its physical, mental, psychological and social aspects.
4. The importance of early intervention in the development of social and manual skills for children with Down syndrome.

**Art therapy and its concept:**

Scholars working in art touched on a number of definitions of art, which (al-Bassiouni) presented as follows:

Art is an expression of emotion, and what evokes the artist in the outside world, which is the artist's ability to convey his thoughts or feelings to the public so that he can feel them, live them, and gain the experience, art also is a nature from of the artist's point of view, which is the creation of new things unknown before, a person becomes able to generalize it and benefit from it in the reality of his life, and it is a communication language whose symbols must be learned so that we can understand the meanings under it.

Art has always been greater than all the definitions imposed on it, so art can be defined as a thing or event that was invented or chosen for its ability to express and move experience within a specific system.

**Art therapy concept:**

The American Art Therapy Association defines it as "a special service for the individual depends on information about human development, and psychological theories, which are familiar with all types of treatment and assessment, and this includes educational, personal, psychomotor and cognitive aspects, and also sufficient information about some methods of treatment such as re-guiding emotional conflicts, increasing self-awareness, developing social skills and behavioral control, solving problems, stopping anxiety, expressing existing ideas, and increasing self-concept.

where the innovative process takes place through models of counseling and psychotherapy, using the innovative process in its simplest form in art to develop and improve the physical, mental and emotional aspects of each individual at all ages.

Art therapy depends on adapting the linear and plastic artistic activities and employing them in an organized and planned manner to achieve diagnostic, therapeutic, developmental and psychological purposes through the use of possible artistic media in restricted and free individual and group activities, according to the goals of the treatment plan and the evolution of its stages, the purposes of each of the therapist and the needs of the client himself .

The American Society defines art therapy as "the therapeutic use of art, within a professional relationship that includes individuals who suffer from illness, trauma, or challenges in living, or individuals who are seeking personal development, through the creation of art and the reflection of its effects on products." and the processes they perform, and can be used to increase self-awareness, deal with symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences, enhance cognitive abilities, and enjoy life's joys .

It is a process of integrating human growth and visual arts (drawing, photography, clay formation, and various art forms) and the innovative process that takes place through models of counseling and psychotherapy, using the innovative process in its simplest form in Art to develop and improve the physical, mental and emotional aspects of every individual at all ages.

Art therapy is a "non-verbal method that may depend on drawing pictures, or drawing using fingers, music, social dance, pottery and various handicrafts, as all of these means are excellent outlets for expressing feelings and ideas without relying on verbal expression in a way directly, and others believe that painting therapy aims to help clients to interpret and understand

the meaning and significance of art ,Their artworks (graphics), and the therapist should provide the appropriate and helpful place for them to express and discover their work, by being encouraging and supportive, giving and caring, honest and sincere, searching for hidden messages in the clients' work, and can give explanations during the treatment session, based on his understanding of context symbols and verbal comments, and the interpretation that gives meaning to the drawing, and the understanding can be at the emotional or cognitive level, or both.

The American Art Therapy Association believes that “art therapy is very similar to art education classes, and the difference is that the practice during the art therapy process is more important than the artwork itself, and art therapy does not aim to produce beautiful art or build talent, but rather aims to help the individual feel good about himself and help him To communicate with others, and support him to take the responsibilities of his life, while art education aims for innovation, and it can be said that art therapy is a special package for the individual that supports the continuation of learning and the achievement of mental health, extraordinary cases is summarized in adapting his various activities and tools as psychological and educational aids that provide the extraordinary person with methods and exits to solve his daily problems and facilitate his means of communication with others, as it is a non-verbal means of communication that helps to vent without the presence of supervision.

Creative arts activities and innovative artistic practices are a pivotal element in psychological and social service settings, however, studies and research looking for the role of arts in mental and health treatment of patients were specific, Artistic practices in mental health centers included a variety of organized and unstructured methods, which correspond to the continuous practices and activities of patients, and these activities include individual practices, through using the artistic workshops and ceremonies ,These methods are not necessarily codified programs offered directly, but they provide a set of methods that can be adapted and applied according to the needs of the patient and the skills of art therapists, and these methods tend to achieve two main goals:

- **Personal Empowerment:** which refers to the development of independence and self-motivation
- **Art Therapy:** Therapeutic objective refers to artistic activities that promote self-awareness, personal growth, well-being, expression, and communication, and that can be undertaken alone or in groups with or without the presence of an art therapist.

One of the most important practices in art therapy is the use of plastic arts, which includes drawing, that is defined as “a work of art based on lines and colors that the child performs to be an alternative to the spoken language by Making a relationship on a surface, expressing things mainly by line, or spots by any tool.

This term is related to the term free expression, which can be defined as those free drawings that children use on any surface, since the beginning of their era of holding a pen, at the age of about ten months.

## **The importance of artistic activities in the treatment of people with special needs in general and Down syndrome in particular:**

1. Artistic activities ensure many opportunities for these children to achieve themselves, reduce their feelings of inferiority and shortcomings, and develop their sense of achievement through artistic work that makes the child feel that he has produced something important.
2. Artistic activities make children express themselves and communicate with those around them without the need to express what is inside them in words, which contributes to venting the pressures and tensions they suffer from, and then achieve balance.
3. Therapeutic artistic activities contribute to the development of preparations, physical manual skills, motor functions and the development of the forces of coordination, judgment and sensorimotor synergy.
4. Development Mental preparations and functions such as perception, attention, memory, discrimination and memorization.
5. The nature of the various materials and tools used in artistic activities allow the child with Down syndrome to express himself through the production of works from a specific type that increases his sense of success and his sense of ability to achieve.

### **Handicrafts:**

It is a field that has its distinctive features, It is a distinct language of expression that has its characteristics that are rooted in the cultural heritage of works of art that included flatness and anthropomorphism, and were fundamentally linked to the innovative factors because of the transformative capabilities it contains for its practitioners in both the artist and the external material, so the work is only artistic, after defining the two transformation processes in the artist and the material in order to form one process, they are works that combine aesthetic, artistic and innovative values in the use and treatment of various materials.

It is also considered as “a creative production for the human being through which he forms materials to express his thoughts and translate his feelings, as it is a field that aims to link the practitioner to nature and the surrounding environment, as well as an educational method that aims to return to thinking with the material supported by the technical foundations and rules that are characterized by the innovative aspect.

The field of handicrafts is characterized by the huge diversity of materials that can be used, have benefit from it , and experiment with them to reach the most appropriate technical and plastic methods for the nature of the used material, so the researcher tries to select a group of materials which can be suitable for the physical and mental nature of children with Down syndrome with a simple mental retardation in the age stage (9- 12), where these materials are used through technical applications as follows

Some applications of (satin and organza ribbons crafts - colored foam strips crafts - paper crafts - ceramic dough crafts).



Applications of colored foam strips crafts	3	Making flowers by applying the technique of striping and wrapping on colored foam strips	3	Venting group therapy,	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
Applications of doughs	4	Coloring by mixing the color with the material during its formation by ropes techniques and Quilling	3	Play therapy, venting, group therapy	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
	5	Forming by ready-made molds and coloring by marbling method	3	Play therapy, venting, dropping	√		√	√	√			√	√
Applications of fabrics crafts	6	(Tufting)	3	venting, group therapy, dropping	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√

Total time = 18 hours as two Sessions every week for three weeks.

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