



KGO SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Enter search phrase

SEARCH

SEE IT ON TV? CHECK HERE

HEALTH

Garment offers help for autism and cerebral palsy

Tuesday, December 11, 2007 | 4:44 PM

By Carolyn Johnson

Some physical and occupational therapists are finding that a special garment, originally designed to help support children with cerebral palsy, is helping kids with other disorders achieve the same effect as swaddling. The garment gives them a soothing feeling of comfort.

"They act like little muscle supports and little postural assists. The child gets to live in the changes I know I can get in therapy, but that I have never been able to make stick. You really need practice," says Beverly Cusick, physical therapist, TheraTogs inventor

Physical therapist Beverly Cusick invented the garments called TheraTogs!

"If you turn your shoulder this way and you want to raise your arm, you'll raise your arm, you'll just use all the wrong muscles. So kids with movement disorders do that, purpose prevails over the way they use their bodies. They'll recruit whatever they got to get to where they're going. So with TheraTogs, we can say, 'okay go, but do it with a better body.'"

Two and a half year old Emily has autism. Her occupational therapist had used TheraTogs in children with cerebral palsy, but after trying them on herself, she decided Emily might benefit as well.

"It kind of was the effect of swaddling an infant. It gives that calming soothing sensation that I thought, if that works, we need to try it."

Emily's mother Linda says her daughter seemed better able to concentrate and focus and it was something her speech therapist picked up on.

"She said that Emily wasn't rocking back and forth anymore. That was the first time she had seen her with the TheraTogs."

No clinical research has been conducted on TheraTogs, although there have been smaller studies measuring changes in the way children walk while wearing the garments. Cusick welcomes research, and in the meantime, enjoys the changes she sees in clients.

"I feel really effective as a clinician now. I feel I can definitely change kids lives and adults lives."

Occupational therapist Tina Blythe has seen marked changes in Emily.

"I think it helps her to refocus because it calms her sensory system down in a way that takes her out of that fight or flight mode."

Linda is convinced the garment has made a difference for her daughter. She's still experimenting with how often Emily wears it. When Emily does not wear the garment, her therapists notice a sharp decline in her physical abilities,

Linda doesn't see the garment as a cure, but she does believe it's allowed her daughter to get much more out of therapy than ever before.

"Because she was feeling secure in her TheraTogs, her second skin, the door opened this much and she could just focus, and grab everything and see how things worked."

For the Garite family, the comfort Emily seems to get from TheraTogs is a comfort to them as well.

TheraTogs cost between \$400 and \$600 dollars. Some insurance plans cover them. Clinics that recommend TheraTogs have samples patients can try out before.

Extra Info: Website: www.TheraTogs.com North Bay Pediatric Rehabilitation Services: 707-429-6836

(Copyright©2007 KGO-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)

ABC7 NEWS TEAM



Carolyn Johnson Carolyn Johnson is the co-anchor of ABC7 News at 6 p.m....

STORY TOOLS

- E-Mail story Print Comment

Share

- Digg this Article Add this article to Del.icio.us

Related Links

- Theratogs website