ABSTRACT

During early preschool years children develop a strong need for peer acceptance. During this stage disabled children have a disadvantage due to their disability because it is not considered to be socially acceptable for nondisabled children to be sympathetic or to communicate with disabled children. This study investigates “the effect of play-acting on the preschool children’s skills and abilities in communication with disabled children.”

The participants of this research include the preschool pupils of one of the districts of Tehran, who are culturally, economically and socially similar to each other.

The statistical sample consists of 40 children of ages 5 to 6 of two preschool groups. They were taken randomly and classified into two groups of 20 members.

Each group in each preschool with 20 nondisabled children accepted two disabled children. In one of the preschool test groups, the children participated in play-acting, and in the other preschool control group, the ordinary programs of the preschool were presented without any theatre program. In this research, an experimental design has been used. Dramatic activities and the skills used by nondisabled children to communicate with disabled children are independent and dependent variables of this research. The tools of data collecting included the observation method (film and photographs), and the results were analyzed using McNemar test.

The results of the study are very significant. It shows that nondisabled children were able to communicate with differently talented children 85% more as a result of 15 sessions of group work. Positive reactions from nondisabled children were developed, and communications between differently talented ones were improved. These results were not evident in the control group.

Moreover, the improvement of verbal and motor skills as well as communicative skills of the disabled children and the change of their attitude towards nondisabled children were also findings of this research.

Key word: Play-acting, Preschool, Disabled children, Communication