The brief history of Japan Portage Association for 25 years:
: The effectiveness of Portage Program services through young adult with Down syndrome

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Introduction

The Portage Program is an early education program for the children with development, delay developed with the governmental funding by the Cooperative Educational Service Agency, CESA, 5 in Wisconsin, USA. The program was published as the Portage Guide to Early Education in 1972. Since then, several revisions have been made. Today, the Program is widely used all over US as well as UK, and also in other countries.

In Japan, the study started from 1980 to adjust the program to Japanese culture. In 1983, Japanese version of the program, “Portage Early Education Program” was published. In 1985, JPA was established to promote the program throughout the country. Prof. Kaoru Yamaguchi is the president of JPA.

Several times in every year, Portage Program training seminars are held by JPA. The participants of various occupational backgrounds have attended; day-care facilities, nurseries, kindergarten, special needs school, special needs class, community health center, children's welfare center, hospitals, welfare facilities, and so on. Also, many of parents, whose children took the Portage Program, attend the seminar and become Portage Consultants. They all help the program spread every areas in Japan. As of May 2011, the number of the members of the association is about 1200 and 47 chapters are active in every areas in Japan.

JPA carried out the follow-up survey of the children who took the Portage Program. The survey showed each child making good progress.

Some parents voiced their appreciation for they have learnt how to interact with their children and the method is still useful when the children are older. The checklist covers the behavioral objectives that developmental age are from zero to six, and the children who finished the Portage Program services will join the meetings of Portage Graduates. Once a year, the Graduates of Portage Program services will meet other Graduates. It would be also very fun for the parents to share the experience of child-rearing and an opportunity to have study more.

JPA celebrated the 20th Anniversary in 2005. In the same year, JPA incorporated the feedback from the 20 years of our clinical experiences and published the revised version of the Portage Early Education Program that meets the current...
conditions of Japanese culture and society.

In addition to individual teaching program, JPA proceeds with developing the Group Teaching Curriculum. It will be very useful for teaching in the group settings such as daycare facilities, kindergarten and nurseries. This curriculum is now actually applying in several experimental sites to verify its clinical validity. JPA is now going to promote for the Group Teaching Curriculum.

What is the Portage Program?

1. Feature of the Portage Program

The aim of the Portage Program is to provide the early education to the children with delayed or unbalanced development, from age zero if possible. The Portage Program has distinct features as follows:

- It is an individual program designed to suit individual development of each child.
- The parents play the central role in the teachings and the teaching takes place at home in daily life settings.
- Teaching methods are based on the principle of applied behavior analysis, and the objectives of the teachings and its results are precisely recorded.

2. Contents of the Portage Program

The program recognizes 6 developmental domains; Infant Development, Social, Self-help, Cognitive, and Motor. For each domain, the sequences of skills to be acquired for the developmental ages from zero to 6 are listed in the Checklist. There are total of 576 of such behavioral objectives. They are color-coded depending on the domain they belong to, and listed in the order of development in the Checklist.

Also, there is the Card File. The Activity Cards which list one behavioral objective on each are in the File. On the Card, it also suggests teaching idea, assisting method, or sample aiding activities. The Developmental Progress Chart is included in the checklist. The Chart allows apparent observation on children's progress.

Along with the Checklist, Card File, and Developmental Progress Chart, the Handbook to guide how to use them consist the materials of the Revised Portage Early Education Program”.

3. Teaching Methods

The teaching starts with developmental assessment using the Checklist measuring the accurate level of the child's development. In addition to the assessment using the Checklist, other standardized tests may be used.
For the achieved behavioral objectives, ☑ is recorded in the column of initial assessment in the Checklist, and --- is recorded for the unachieved objectives. Based on the assessment, Portage Consultants discuss with parents and select target activities. The activities are selected from each domain. According to the child's developmental level, the target activities may be broken into smaller steps so that the child can gain a new skill following the steps. The Portage Consultants will write down the tentative target activities for the next meeting so the parents can take over the teaching at home. After a week or a month, Portage Consultants will assess the progress and proceed to the next target activities. Portage Consultants does not teach the child directly; the parents do. Portage Consultants transfers their teaching skills to the parents. “The parent-centered teaching” is the distinctive feature of the Portage Program. The parents use the following teaching techniques.

4. Teaching Techniques

A target activity selected from the Checklist may be analyzed and broken down to the attainable smaller steps to suit child's developmental stage. This is called “task analysis”.

In this process, appropriate aids are necessary. Such aids include physical assistance, visual assistance, verbal assistance, and/or the combination of them. For these assistances, the techniques derived from applied behavior analysis are used such as “prompt” to give an appropriate assistance, or “fading” to lessen assistance gradually, or “chaining” to “chain” the similar activities to form more complicated activity.

Also, the principles of reinforcement and extinction are used to praise the desired behaviors and to ignore the undesirable behaviors.

When a child achieves a target activity, the date is recorded in the Checklist. The progress and result of home teaching is also recorded in a Home Teaching Record. An Activity Chart is recorded when necessary.

5. Parts of the Portage Teaching and Support for Parents

The Portage Program consists of the three parts. The first part is structured teaching using the Checklist based on the assessment, as described in the previous sections. The second part is to generalize the acquired skills in the daily life settings, and to maintain them. Then, the third part is to support and assist parents so they can home teach more easily. Portage Consultants positively involve the problems and concerns the parents have, and try to seek solutions together. For example, when parents are concerned about medical, schooling, or family problems, they cannot concentrate on quality home teaching to their children. It is important that Portage Consultants become good partners for parents to work together.

Purpose

We will talk about the clinical effectives of the Portage activity of JPA for these 25 years, as one of the example, by showing the compositions that written by two young adults with Down syndrome who have received Portage services from very young age.
Results

The brief History of Japan Portage Association is as below;
From April 1980 to March 1983
Adaptation of the Portage Program was studied with subsidy of Ministry of Health and Welfare. “The research on goal and effect of intervention for the children and infants with developmental delay” was carried out led by Kaoru Yamaguchi.
April 1981
Laboratory Room was set up in Special School attached to Tokyo Gakugei University
April 1982
Laboratory Room was set up in the playroom of Kyorin University Hospital Pediatrics.
November 1983
Dr. Sidney Bijou and Mr. George Jessin were invited for three lecture sessions in Japan.
The Japanese Portage Program for Early Education was completed and published
Portage consultation room was set up at Shufunotomo Ikuji Center 21
June 1984
In the United States, the first Portage Program seminar was carried out. Since then, The Portage seminar took place twice.
September 1984
The first Portage Program seminar took place in Tokyo. The seminar took place once a year since then.
March 1985
Japan Portage Association was established
November 1985
Dr. Sidney Bijou and Ms. Barbara Wolfe from the United States were invited for lecture sessions at 5 locations in Japan.
August 1986
The third Portage Program seminar was carried out in Hakone. The Portage Staff from the United States were invited as lecturers. The seminar took place one more occasion.
September 1986
JPA participated the International Portage Conference in England.
September 1987
Lecture and research presentation session was carried out. This session takes place once a year since then.
August 1988
International Portage Conference in Tokyo took place.
International Portage Association was established.
August 1990
The 6th Portage Program seminar took place. The Portage Program seminar takes place twice a year since then.
JPA participated the 3rd International Portage Conference in the United States.
November 1992
JPA participated the 4th International Portage Conference in Jamaica.
August 1993
Dr. David Shearer, Chairperson of the International Portage Association, was invited for lecture session.
November 1993
Support group for the Portage graduates was formed. The first general assembly of the association took place. The
general assembly takes place once a year since then.
March 1994
Advanced seminar for Portage instructors was set up. The advanced seminar is held separate from the introductory seminar.
August 1995
The first study meeting for certified instructors was carried out. The study meeting takes place once a year since then. JPA celebrated its 10th anniversary. Dr. Sean Cameron, Chairperson of British Portage Association, was invited as a lecturer. The invited panelists from Asian countries participated panel discussion.
June 1996
Laboratory room at Special School at Tokyo Gakugei University and consultation room at Shufunotomo Ikuji Center 21 were closed.
New consultation room was set up in main office of JPA.
September 1996
JPA participated the 6th International Portage Conference in England.
November 1998
JPA hosted the 7th International Portage Conference in Hiroshima.
December 1999
JPA was authenticated as Non-Profit Organization from Tokyo Metropolitan Government
April 2000
The application was granted and JPA acquired NPO status.
October 2000
JPA participated the 8th International Portage Conference in Alabama, USA.
November 2002
JPA participated the 9th International Portage Conference in Cypress
November 2004
JPA participated the 10th International Portage Conference in the Philippines
May 2005
JPA hosted 20th Anniversary of the Japan Portage Association
September 2006
JPA participated the 11th International Portage Conference in Latvia
September 2008
JPA participated the 12th International Portage Conference in Holland
June 2010
JPA hosted 25th Anniversary of the Japan Portage Association
October 2010
JPA participated the 13th International Portage Conference in India.
The composition of two young adults who received Portage Program services from the very young age;

Erika Shirahata : Birth year 1985  living place; Gifu Prefecture, Japan
私らしく生きるために必要なこと

白幡 紅梨花

・ポーテージと私

私は、日本ポーテージ協会と共に育ってきました。日本ポーテージ協会が25年になるので、私も25歳になりました。4ヶ月の赤ん坊の時からポーテージ・プログラムで育てられました。

初めて教室にうかがったのは、7か月の時（1986年3月）です。吉川真知子先生が相談の担当でした。その後、小学校に入学するまで2ヶ月に1度母と姉とから新幹線で東京へ通い、東京へ行かないときには電話相談を受けてきました。また両親は1986年の夏、初級セミナーを受け、相談員の資格も取りました。1週間に1回、私のポーテージ課題について父と母二人で話し合いをして課題をこなしてきました。

私がポーテージプログラムを終了してから、毎年、12月に「ポーテージ友の会」が開かれるようになりました。私は毎年参加しています。大好きな歌をうたいます。姉がバイオリンで伴奏してくれます。友の会の時には、発表会の司会も引き受けます。1年に1回、ポーテージの友達に会うことも楽しみの一つです。

・仕事と私

私は、福祉工場でクッキー・ケーキを作る仕事をしています。毎朝、6時45分に家を出て、バス、電車を乗り継いで工場に着くのは8時10分です。通勤している従業員の中で一番遠いのです。高校を卒業してここで働き始めて8年目になります。時々トラブルもありますが、みんな仲良く友達です。今年のバザーでは、ロールケーキにも挑戦しました。泡立てを1日5ボール分もやりました。ふわふわのロールケーキは大好評でした。母にもお土産に買ってあげました。柔らかくておいしいと、言ってくれました。

クッキー・ケーキ以外に、パン・おべんとうも作っています。それから喫茶店も営業しています。住民のあったお弁当、お菓子、パンを配達したり、販売にも出かけます。大きな声で「いらっしゃいませ！」とお客さんを呼び込みます。売買した日は、とても充実した気持ちになります。

・家庭と私

私は、毎晩夕食を作るヤ、夜8時ごろまで母の帰宅を待ちます。仕事帰りのバスの中で、メニューを考えます。得意のおかずは、ポテトサラダと海藻サラダ、薄焼き卵、肉じゃがです。いま、勉強しているのは煮もののです。

・合唱団（余暇）と私

週末は、入団10年目の「ぎふ児童合唱団」で歌うのが何よりの楽しみ！
毎週・土曜日の2時から5時までが練習時間です。練習場には、電車とバスを乗り継いでいきます。

合唱団は毎年4月の末に定期演奏会をします。だから、3月と4月は日曜日も練習をします。弦楽やボビュラー、ミュージカルもやります。今年は「ケンちゃんときりん」というミュージカルを公演しました。歌いながら踊るので、とても楽しいです。

私は、合唱団で大先輩なので、大学生や高校生といっしょに、小学生の面倒もみます。合唱団は1年じゅう、様々な所で演奏をしています。
私の毎日はとても忙しいです。だから楽しいです。
Translation in English:

Something to needs for going my own way!!  Erika Shirahata

Portage Program services and my growth

I have been grown with the history of Japan Portage Association. This year is the 26th Anniversary of Japan Portage Association, I am also 26 years old!! I have received Portage Program service from the age of four months.

On Mar, 1986, when I was 7 months old, I had visited the Portage classroom for the first time. Ms. Yoshikawa was my consultant for Portage Program service. Till my admission to Elementary School, I and my mother had been attended to Tokyo office by Shinkansen once every 2 months, and we also had received telephone consultations. My parents attended introductory course of seminars for Portage Program, and both of them became a Certified Portage Consultant. They discussed about my behavioral objectives in the Portage Program for every week.

After I had finished Portage Program service, the support group meetings for the Portage Graduates have been held on December in every year. I attend it every year, I used to sing my favorite songs, and my elder sister plays a violin as accompaniment for my songs.

I sometimes preside at the support group meetings for the Portage Graduates. It is my pleasure to see many Portage friends every year in the Portage Graduates.

My job and my life

I am working at welfare factory in which I have been baking cookies and cakes. I usually go off the factory, leaving home at 6:45 every morning, riding a bus and train, I arrive the factory at 8:10. I live closer than anyone most of the workers. It has past 8 years since I begin my job immediately after graduating from high school. Although I and other workers sometimes have had a mistake, we have been working with mutual aid because we are friends. We had been challenging for making roll cakes to sell at bazaar in this year. I had whipped for 5 bolls in a day. The light and fluffy roll cakes were very popular. I had bought it for my mother as a gift. She said to me that was very fluffy and taste good.

We are now making not only cookies and cakes but also some breads, lunch boxes for lunch, and even managing the café shop. According to the order, we will deliver the lunchboxes, sweets, and breads for we sell these things, we call out customers in a loud voice. The day in which everything sold out, we feel a sense of happiness and fulfillment.

My home and my life

I used to cook dinner every night, I wait for my mothers’ coming back to home at 8:00 pm. I usually think a menu for dinner in the return bus. My special dishes are potato salad, seaweed salad, egg baked thin, and braised meat and potatoes. Now I am going to study for simmered foods.

Chorus group (leisure) and my life

Our Chorus group holds a regular concert at the end of every April. So we have lessens every Sunday in March and April. We will sing children’s songs, popular songs, and musical songs. In this year, we had played the musical “Ken and Giraffe”. A musical are made by dance and song, it is very interesting for me. I am one of the elder members of this chorus group, I usually take care of members in elementary school students, accompanying with members of university and high students. Our Chorus group will play in many stages in every months in a year. Though I think I am very busy every day, it is very interesting for me to sing a song in our Chorus group.
Michito Kanno; Birth year 1995  Living place; Miyagi Prefecture, Japan
I went Indonesia (17th ACMR) with my friends and family. I swam in the pool of the hotel stayed. After the swimming, we played the dance “SAKURA”. I enjoyed dancing with URARA. in the farewell party. I had spaghetti at the night. I took pictures at the presentation of Mr. Nishinaga. I played the dance “SAKURA” in front of Indonesian people.

We went to Tsukuba (16th ACMR) by bus. After arriving Tsukuba, we had snacks. In the Hotel in Tsukuba, We (Mr. Nishinaga, Michika, Ayano and Ben) went to each room to sleep. We had dinner in Tsukuba. I played the dance “Nandedaro?” with Sayaka, Miho, Michika, Ayano, and Ben. I watched DVD in the bus. The bus drove by Mr. Nishinaga was broken.

We went to Philippines. I took air plane at the first time. We had dinner. We took bus in Philippines. At the hotel, I and Mr. Nishinaga stayed same room. We present speech in front of Filipino people. Kenichi’s speech was great too. I had rice and pork at the farewell party. I had an ice cream. I had French fries potatoes.

The department of high school of special support school, I made lots of new friends. New teachers came to the department of high school. I am now second grade of the department of high school. My teacher is Yuko Oshikiri. She is very kind, cute, and beautiful. Her age is 23 years old. Michito is being cool too. I wear a school uniform that seems for adult.

I am 16 years old now. I am a young student. When I grow up, I would like to have a job. I also would like to be a handsome guy (IKEMEN). My dream is to become a singer. I will be a beautiful man. If I would be a boy friend of my most favorite girl, I would contact her with my very kindness. I like singers those who Arashi, SMAP, and SYUCHISHIN (Singers). I sang a song “Ganbare Nippon” in the graduation ceremony of the department of junior high school. If I would be a handsome guy, lots of girls would think to be my girl friend that is my pleasure.

On 11th March, 2011, the great earth quake was happened. At that time, I was in bus that going back to home. I felt I was not afraid of everything at all. I hid myself in the bus. With all family members, we had dinner under the lights of candle, I went to shopping with my family and helped them. I did for tending the store and helped to make fires. I had dinner and breakfast. I studied at home. I went to shopping with my uncle.

Discussion

Two young adults who received Portage Program services from under one year of age have written some compositions. They have had excellent memories about Portage Program services and their daily lives. Both of them have dreams towards their futures.

The history of Japan Portage Association is even more than 25 years. It means that the age of persons who had received Portage Program services in the earliest days are more than 25 years old, and those who are going to begin their express their feeling, opinions, wills, and demands in their daily life and towards their futures.

One of them, Mr. Michito Kanno who have attended at the ACMR conference for three times (16th ACMR in Tsukuba, Japan, 17th ACMR in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and 18th ACMR in Taipei, Taiwan) and have already presented his feeling and thinking of his job and daily life. He is going to looking forward to attending the 20th ACID in Juju, Korea. Ms Erika Shirahata have expressed her feeling and experiences of her job and life in the panel discussion of the
25th Anniversary of Japan Portage Association.

We think that the effectiveness of Portage Program services would appear in the daily life activities of those young adult persons, because the Portage Program services will stress a parent plays the central role in the teachings and the teaching takes place at home in daily life settings.

We also think that it needs to support sufficiently for children with special needs in the school age and to develop new programs especially for them, because the behavioral objectives of Portage Program for children the developmental age from zero to six.

We, JPA, have already developed the program for applying in group teaching settings, in which children with developmental delay will be taught inclusively without developmentally delay by using Play Units in accordance with multi-level teaching.

The social movement for advocacy and inclusion would be the important factors for people with special needs to participate them in social activities. In Japan, the education system for children with special needs have changed dramatically from special education to special needs education. The special needs education will develop towards for constructing the system for inclusive education which have been proposed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It would be more important to hear the voice of people with special needs. It is more important to emper them to able to self advocacy. Portage Program services must be improved including such viewpoint in near future.