

# RePlay for Kids

Repairing and adapting toys and devices for children with disabilities

www.replayforkids.org

## 2007 Annual Report

December 2007

### RePlay for Kids

At **RePlay for Kids**, our mission is to increase the availability of toys and assistive devices for children with disabilities.

We fulfill our mission by repairing devices and adapting a wide range of battery-operated toys, therefore increasing not only the number but also the variety of toys and devices that are available for children with disabilities.



Adapted toys are easier to play with for children with disabilities.

#### No other organization in Northeast Ohio provides similar services.

Several service organizations in Northeast Ohio purchase specially adapted toys and other assistive devices for use by children with disabilities but, due to the limited market, adapted toys are significantly more expensive than their mainstream counterparts.

Most organizations providing services for children with disabilities have limited resources and often cannot afford to replace broken toys or assistive devices. These organizations lack the personnel with technical

knowledge or available time required to modify and repair such devices.

**RePlay for Kids** provides free repair and modification services to these organizations, thereby increasing the number of functioning toys and assistive devices on hand for children with disabilities.

At **RePlay for Kids**, we pursue our mission of increasing the availability of toys and assistive devices for children with disabilities by repairing existing devices, adapting mainstream toys, designing new devices and educating families and clinicians.



**RePlay for Kids** is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that repairs and modifies toys and assistive devices for use by children with disabilities. **RePlay for Kids** provides these services at no charge to nonprofit organizations that provide medical, educational, or recreational resources for children with disabilities in Northeast Ohio.

### Learning by Playing



Young children learn through play and social interaction. These activities teach them to relate to other people and to interact with and control their environment. Children with disabilities are no exception. For

many children with disabilities, playing with toys is a critical step in learning alternative communication skills. Toys help these children develop play skills and teach them cause and effect relationships. Limitations in strength and coordination in children with disabilities often prevent



them from using mainstream toys. Adapted toys encourage a child to make a certain motion as part of his/her physical therapy treatment.

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# RePlay for Kids 2007 Annual Report



A presentation to teach elementary school students about disabilities.



Volunteers repair toys that will be distributed to the agencies served by **RePlay for Kids**.

**“OUR MISSION IS TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF TOYS AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.**

—  
*Bill Memberg,  
President, RePlay for Kids*

## Community Service

In the past 3 years, we have expanded the number of organizations that we serve. We work with the U.S. Marines’ “Toys for Tots” program, by selecting some of their donated toys that are



appropriate for use by children with dis-

abilities and adapt them accordingly. We then distribute these toys to children with disabilities via our agency partners.



A child plays with adapted toys as part of his therapy.

We provide educational materials on our web site, as well as seminars to increase awareness of toy adaptation, and provide tutorials on toy repair and modification.

At **RePlay for Kids**, we are always looking for opportunities to increase the number of agencies that we serve.

## Partner Agencies

In the past four years, we have expanded the number of organizations that we serve to include the following:

- *Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Stark and Lake Counties*
- *United Cerebral Palsy of Cleveland*
- *Matthew’s Lending Library*
- *Aristocrat Berea*
- *Hattie Larlham Foundation*
- *Society for Handicapped Citizens of Medina*
- *United Disability Services of Akron*
- *Akron and Cleveland School Districts*

## Toy Workshops

**RePlay for Kids** has been hosting informal toy workshops since 1994. In 1999, **RePlay for Kids** was formally established as a nonprofit corporation to further increase the productivity of this toy repair and modification effort. **RePlay for Kids** is the Northern Ohio representative of the National Toy Adaptation



**RePlay for Kids’** founder and president, Bill Memberg, shows student volunteers at one of the workshops how to install switches onto mainstream toys.

shops, during which volunteers spend a couple hours repairing and modifying toys. Since we utilize small, portable toolkits, our workshops can be set up in a variety of locations. Workshops have been held at sites such as NASA, Ernst & Young, and Nestle.

Network. We currently host monthly toy work-

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**Toy Repair Workshops.** In these workshops, volunteers come and repair as many toys and assistive devices as possible in a 2 hour period. Workshop activities often involve simple repairs such as a broken wire or corroded battery terminal. Repaired items are checked for safe operation prior to being returned to the agencies.



**Toy Adaptation Workshops.** In these workshops, volunteers adapt mainstream, battery-operated toys by placing a switch cable in parallel with the original switch, allowing the toy to be operated by a variety of alternative switches that could be plugged into the cable. Over the past two years, there have been 28 toy repair and adaptation workshops.



## Educational Activities

RePlay for Kids has presented two types of seminars on toy adaptation in partnership with United Cerebral Palsy of Cleveland. One type of seminar is targeted at parents of children with disabilities, and focuses on the options available for obtaining adapted toys (commercial manufacturers, do-it-yourself books, internet re-

sources). The other type of seminar is a hands-on workshop, where occupational and physical therapists, parents of children with disabilities, or other non-technical volunteers are shown how to adapt a toy. In one hands-on workshop, seven volunteers without technical backgrounds were able to successfully adapt more than twenty

toys in one afternoon.

RePlay for Kids has also participated in the Hattie Larlham Foundation's Operation Connect, an annual conference held in Akron in which elementary school students learn about disabilities.

Volunteers learn about disabilities and electronics.



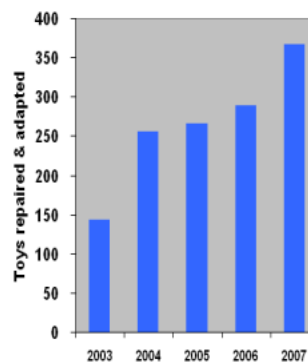
Educational seminars teach individuals and organizations how to adapt toys.

## Progress

Since 1999, volunteers associated with RePlay for Kids have repaired over 900 toys and assistive devices and produced over 680 adapted toys. An analysis was made of the savings provided to local agencies by RePlay for Kids. Since 1999, approximately 87% of the non-working or unmodified toys and devices given to RePlay for Kids were returned to the agencies working properly. In order to pur-

chase replacements for the 1582 toys and devices that were repaired or adapted over the past nine years, the agencies would have spent over \$73,000. The past five years, we have increased the number of toys and devices that have been repaired or adapted at workshops, from 142 in 2003 to 365 in 2007. The 365 toys repaired or adapted this past year have a total value of approximately \$15,000. This includes 213 newly

adapted toys that were donated to the agencies for the holiday season.



RePlay for Kids has been able to repair or adapt most of the toys received from our partner agencies, which translates into savings of over \$10,000 per year for these agencies.

“WE ARE SO GLAD TO HAVE REPLAY FOR KIDS AS ANOTHER PARTNER IN OUR EFFORT TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.” -

Director, Ancillary Services for the Society for Handicapped Citizens of Medina County

**Past 5 years**  
**61 workshops**  
**1,315 toys repaired or adapted**  
**\$54,564 saved**

Currently, most of the toy workshops are held at facilities provided by Case Western Reserve University at no cost to **RePlay for Kids**.



These are a few comments from some of the agencies that we have assisted:

*"The toys that were donated are not toys that one would typically find in an adapted equipment catalog. The toys are age and gender appropriate and they are typical to the toys with which other children often play. This makes them very motivating and special to our students."* – Assistant Director of Education, Medina County Board of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities

*"I just wanted to thank RePlay for Kids for the wonderful service you offer to programs serving children with disabilities. Our agency is fortunate to be part of this program. We estimate a savings of \$350 to \$500 annually in repair bills thanks to your organization. This may not seem like much to some agencies but for us it is a small fortune."* – Coordinator, Toy & Resource Center, United Disability Services of Akron

*"Please extend our gratitude to those responsible for giving our toys a new lease on life! We are so grateful that you were able to repair [them] and even adapt one for us so it can be used with a switch. We truly appreciate this service being offered at no cost to our agency. We are so glad to have RePlay for Kids as another partner in our effort to enrich the lives of children with disabilities."* – Director, Ancillary Services for the Society for Handicapped Citizens of Medina County

*"Thank you for your generous assistance with toy repairs and modifications for the children of Broadmoor School. The repair of battery operated toys and communication devices is an ongoing need at our facility. The toys will be used in the preschool and school age classrooms for children with severe disabilities. We appreciate the time, dedication, and expertise of your volunteers. We look forward to working with you again in the future. Thank you again for providing a much needed service to our community."* – Occupational Therapist, Lake County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities



## Funding

**RePlay for Kids** is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization funded by grants from Mattel, ACCESS, the Pilot Club of Akron, the Gannett Foundation, the Junior League of Cleveland, and individual donations.

## Support and Involvement



Each toy has to be matched to the appropriate child, so cooperation with other agencies is essential for **RePlay for Kids**. We depend on them both as a source of toys to repair and as an outlet for the toys we adapt. We have been successful in developing continuing relationships with several agencies over the last seven years. At the same time, other agencies have expressed interest in our services, but we have been unable to follow up with them because we need more volunteers to keep up with the amount of technical and administrative work required to increase the number of functional toys and assistive devices that we provide. **If you would like to volunteer, contact us at**



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