

## Project to help families using “Portage” methodology

Project manager: Arakcheyeva Yulia I.

Portage was developed in the USA in the 70-s of the last century and is being successfully used in many countries world wide. The purpose of the method is to work with the family who are bringing up a child with a disability, helping the child achieve main developmental milestones and remove/ reduce barriers in the child's/family social involvement. It's an approach involving team work with one specialist working directly with the family, but with the whole team providing advice/ support at the team meeting and joint visits. The team is lead by the senior worker. All members of the team are trained to use Portage. During the sessions parents are taught ways of structured teaching the child on a daily basis. Parents are guided to observe the child, plan achievable goals and encourage desirable behaviour. Portage checklist includes main areas of development addressing the needs of the child: infant stimulation, socialization, cognitive, motor and self help. All the areas include the sequence of steps a child should make to develop.

AS from January 2013 we have had a lot of families approaching us for help, who couldn't unfortunately attend sessions on daily basis. Their children have multiple disabilities. Having taken that into consideration the centre's committee decided to introduce this new method from January 2014.

5 members of team from the centre attended Basic Portage workshop in Moscow in Yasenevo centre on 14.10.2013-16.10.2013. Following this, in “Golden Ray” centre we have started the project to help families with children with disabilities using social-psychological model “Portage”.

Goal of the project: Individual psychological and pedagogical help to families with disabled children in main areas of development, upbringing, rehabilitation and adaptation.

Tasks:

1. Identifying children who need to be included into the project
2. Diagnosing and creating entry profiles using Portage checklist
3. Assisting adaptation and rehabilitation of a child, teaching parents to use structured teaching in the child's daily life
4. Patronage (psychological and pedagogical) of the families with children with disabilities

Main stages of the project:

I Preparation

II Main stage  
 III Conclusive

**Dates when the project is going to take place: From the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2014 until 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2014**

**Participants:**

**Project manager:** Arakcheyeva Yulia (branch manager and psychologist – teacher)

**Team:** Grishina E.D (psychologist-teacher), Gurkina I.V (teacher – defectologist), Blagushina O.S (psychologist -teacher), Yevsyutina T.V (teacher-defectologist).

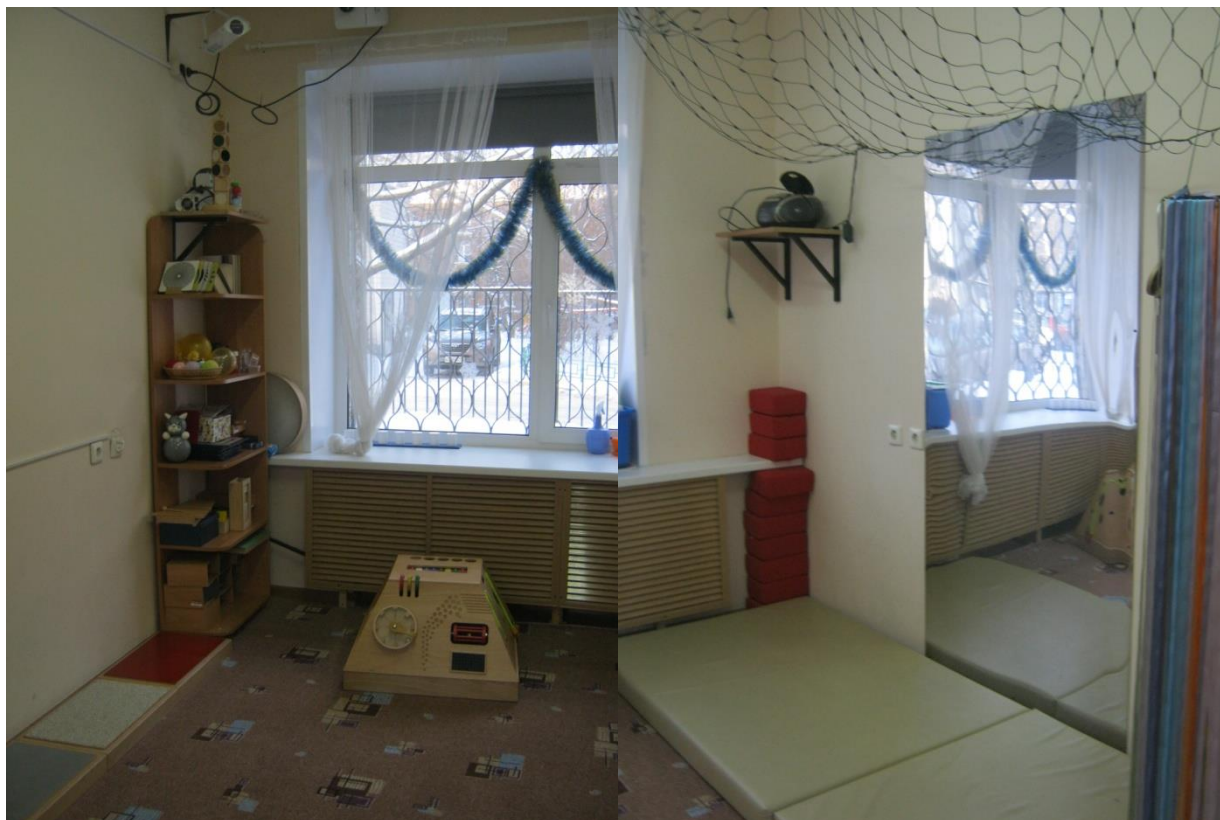
Detailed plan of Portage project in “Golden ray” centre

Stage	Activity	Dates	Who is responsible
preparation	Gathering information about children who need to be included into the project. Team meetings and documents preparation. Producing a detailed plan of the project and agreeing it with the centre's director Rozhnova N.O. Preparation of weekly documents for the project.	09.01.2014 – 17.01.2014	Arakcheyeva Yulia
Main stage	Establishing entry profiles of the children using Portage checklists. Support for the families and filling in the documents for parents to take home (in “Sun Ray” centre). Starting the reports on the project progress. Weekly meeting of team members. Monthly reports and consultations with our partner	20.01.2014-20.06.2014	Arakcheyeva Yulia Grishina E.D Gurkina I.V Blagushina O.S Yevsyutina T.V

	organisation “Obeschaniye” Ryazan.		
Conclusive	Concluding on the results of the project. Writing the final report. Systematising the materials of the project and meeting to make a decision on whether to carry on with the project.	23.06.2014 – 27.06.2014	Arakcheyeva Yulia I.

As on 07.03.2014 there are 6 children who are included into the project based in the “Golden Ray” centre. Meetings with families and children are held once a week in the centre, because one of the tasks of the project is to help children with disabilities and their parents to socialise. In the last few years, professionals in the field pay special attention to giving the opportunity and encouraging children with special needs to adapt to social life. Methods of organising such events (for socializing) are improving and disabled children's potential to take part in that form of activity is being studied. Professionals also consider opportunities of integrating disabled children into society. Due to peculiarities in development children with disabilities are very limited in social contacts and communication opportunities. They also very often struggle establishing communication, as they appear disinterested in interaction with the world around them. Parents of disabled children have limited circle of friends and are at risk of narrowing their communication spectrum. A family overall very often experiences social isolation. This factor emphasizes the shock and consequences after a disabled child being born, which is very traumatizing for all the members of the family. Therefore, it's very important for the family to be able to leave the flat and get out to visit various establishments and friends/other members of family.

The photos below illustrate the rooms and equipment we use to work with children in the project (sensory room):



Play room:



February 2014 Report on the work with children using Portage system in the centre "Golden Ray"

№	PW's name	Child's full name	DOB	Diagnosis	Portage started	Success for the month	Other information
1	Yevsyutina T	Rita B (1)	15/07/10	Developmental delay	17/02/14	Establishing entry profile using checklist	
2	Yevsyutina T	Ivan R (2)	02/09/10	Speech delay	03/02/14	Established entry profile using Portage checklist. Vanya had learnt to tell his name on verbal request. No new skills started due to child's illness.	From 24.02 on sick leave
3	Blagushina O	Maxim G (3)	17/05/10	Developmental delay with autistic features.	09/01/14	Established entry profile using Portage checklist. Maxim has learnt to establish eye contact during play and watching an adult in his line of vision. New: adults will repeat vocalizing Maxim makes and wait for his response.	
4	Grishina E	Andrei B (4)	11/06/11	Developmental delay, CP	09/01/14	Established entry profile using Portage checklist.. Continued: turning head towards an adult who is trying to attract his attention.	

						New: - reach for an object and try to grasp it; - eat mashed food.	
5	Gurkina I	Sargis A (5)	14/11/10	CP, Spastic diplegia	17/02/14	Established entry profile using Portage checklist.	
6	Arakcheyeva Yulia	Roman R (6)	19/04/12	Severe developmental delay, microcephaly	21/02/14	Started establishing entry profile using Portage checklist.	

Photos from meeting with families



