

**Part C Project Details**

2010/0401 (Revised)

**Service needs for students in our school**

Our School is a combined grade special school catering for students with mild grade and moderate grade intellectual disability. Other than day students living in the surrounding areas, we also have students living in the boarding section of our school. Some of them are orphans, some of them come from single parent families, families with sick parent, families with marital problems and the like. Whether they are day students or boarders, most of them come from families of low socio-economic status, deprived from opportunities and environment fostering the growth of children. They do not have toys to play with, their parents do not have time or the skills to play with them. This phenomenon adds to the inadequacies of the children whose social and interpersonal skills are one of their major weaknesses.

**How the project would become part of the school's strategic development**

In order to meet the needs of our students mentioned above, one of our major concerns in our 3-year plan(2009-2012) is the whole-person development of our students. We adopt the concept of Multiple Intelligence and launched a number of extracurricular after school programs such as Music Therapy, Creative Dance, Roller-blade Ice-skating, Drama, Gardening, Drawing, Magic, Chinese Opera, Lion Dancing etc. are held all through these years. However, many of these programs stress on the musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, logic-mathematical and even naturalistic development, but interpersonal and social intelligence are seldom touched upon.

**Readiness of the applicant organization for undertaking the project**

This proposed project is a multi-disciplinary collaboration among our staff, with the school social worker as co-ordinator. Our school speech therapist, occupational therapist will assist in obtaining baseline of the students in primary school section. Teachers will be directly involved in the play therapy session so that a 0.5 supply teacher will be recruited to take up their teaching duties. The entire QEF team will consist of more than 10 staff members.

### **Targets and expected number of beneficiaries**

- At least 60 children will be directly involved in the programs, having a total of 800 hours of training sessions.
- At least 10 teaching and specialist staff will receive training in play therapy and will implement the strategies and skills in direct contact with children.
- At least 20 parents will be involving in the follow-up programs. They will be trained with the skills in playing with children.

### **The conceptual framework**

#### *Importance of "play" in child development*

Play is the central activity of childhood and the single most important means in which children learn about themselves, others, and the world around them (Landreth, 2002). It is also considered as the most developmentally appropriate learning strategy in working with children (Cattanach, 1992) and to practice new skills in safe and supportive environments (Boucher, 1999). For children with special needs, play can be seen as an effective treatment modality. It is a beneficial add-on treatment to traditional behavioral interventions for children with autism and those with developmental delay (Ryan, 2004; Stagnitti & Cooper, 2009).

#### *The Theraplay model*

Theraplay is a structured form of play therapy and is an engaging, relationship-focused approach. It is based on attachment theory and it models the healthy, attuned interaction between adult and child (Jernberg & Booth, 1999). Based to this approach, children's problems are rooted in their earliest relationship with their caregivers. Theraplay has been used for a variety of emotional, social, and behavioral problems ranging from acting out aggressive child; and the timid, fearful child (e.g., Munns, 2009; Siu, 2009a, 2009b). Theraplay is also suitable for children who have special needs, for example, autistic children who have difficulty in forming relationships. Wettig, Franke, and Fjordbak (2006) reported a reduction in symptoms and an increase in social mutuality after 26 thirty-minute sessions of Theraplay for children with communication problems.

According to the Theraplay model as described by Jernberg and Booth (1999), a healthy adult-child relationship is based on four underlying dimensions:

- *Structuring*: The adult sets boundaries to ensure the child's safety and well-being, as well as making the environment predictable and organized.
- *Engaging*: The adult interacts with the child in a variety of enjoyable activities that engages the child's attention and participation.
- *Nurturing*: The adult is warm, tender, calming and comforting, leading the child to feel valued, important and loved.
- *Challenging*: The adult encourages the child to strive to try new activities, take appropriate risks, master new skills, and become more independent and self-confident

Children with social and emotional problems are those who encounter difficulties in one or more of the dimensions described above when relating to the people around. Theraplay is involved in helping children regulate their feelings and develop healthy adult-child relationship. Sessions are run in a structured format, with adult taking the lead. Each session lasts for about half an hour. Activities in each session are designed by addressing the various degrees or combinations of Structuring, Engaging, Nurturing, and Challenging as seen in an individual child.

### *Group Theraplay*

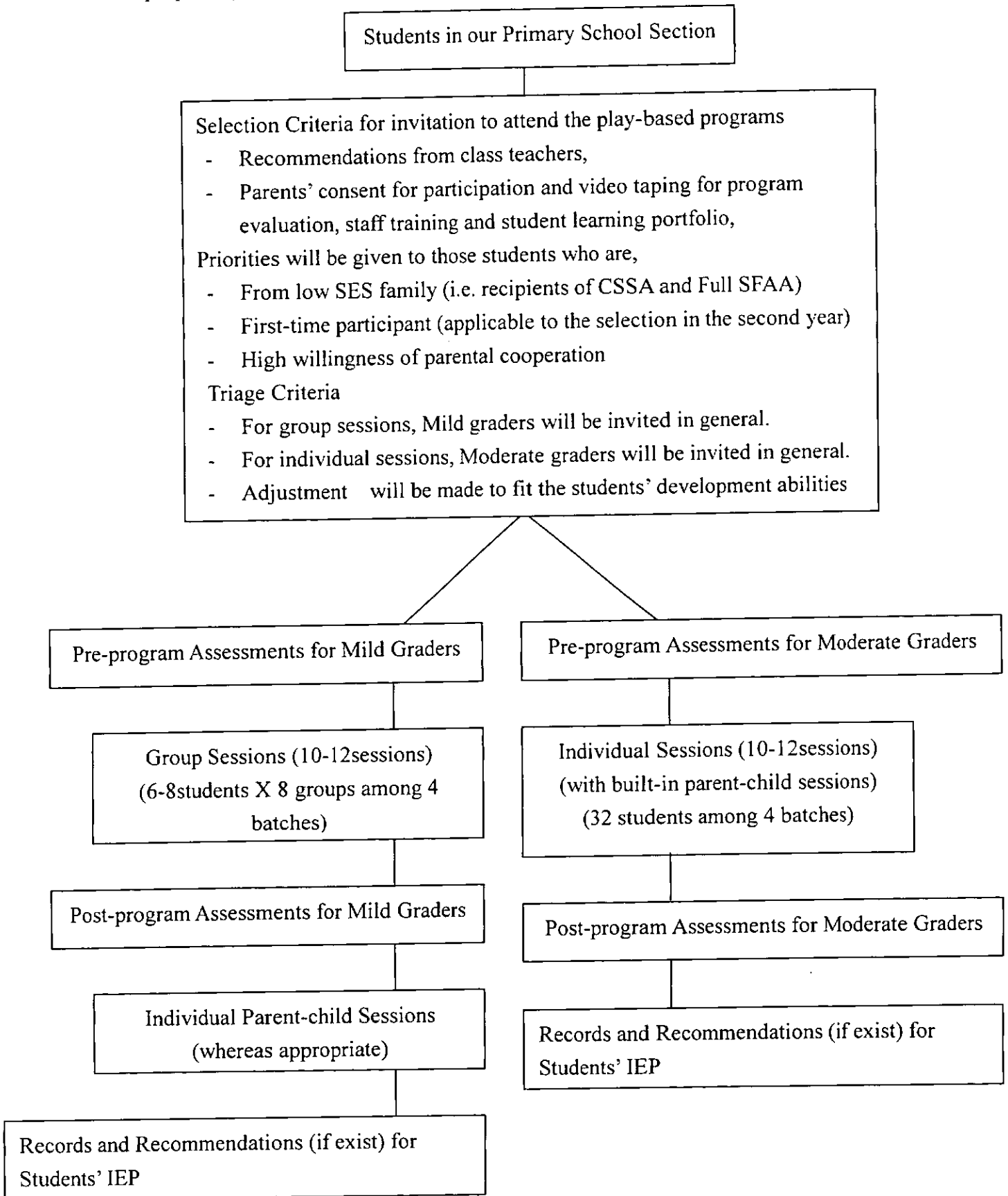
Group Theraplay is a logical extension of individual Theraplay that offers the unique approach to relating with others. According to Rubin and Tregay (1989) and Munns (2009), Group Theraplay strives to increase the sense of connection and belonging among group members. As in individual Theraplay, the group program details will need various degrees or combinations of activities based on the four dimensions described in the previous be in this section. Group Theraplay is guided by a simple set of rules that evolved out of the four Theraplay dimensions. The leader is always in charge of the group. A group session usually lasts for about 30 minutes. The size of the group can be constructed based on age, issues, and behaviors displayed by participants (Rubin & Tregay, 1989).

In Group Theraplay, sessions call for different types of activities at the beginning, middle and end. In the beginning phase, group members are introduced to rules, rituals, and atmosphere of the Theraplay group. Hence, simple, well-structured, and nurturing activities are often included. In the middle phase, other Theraplay dimensions in addition to nurturing ones are included.. Activities are chosen that address an issue that the group is dealing with, for example, increasing comfort with eye contact, developing trust among each other, enhancing self-control and group

cooperation. In the termination phase, activities are geared toward helping members prepare for and accept the ending of the group. These include creating tangible memoirs for each member to keep (such as a special list that describes the positive characteristics of each member).

Effectiveness of Theraplay groups in the classroom is reported in Rubin and Tregay (1989). The teachers noticed benefits such as reduced aggression, more spontaneous caring among peers, more cooperation, and the teachers themselves felt close to the children. Recent studies relating to the effectiveness of Group Theraplay with diverse groups has been documented (see Rubin, 2010). For example, children with autism were reported to benefit from group theraplay activities by their significant increase in social awareness and motivation to relate to others. Cognitively impaired adolescents were reported to have an increased sense of belonging, and better expression of both their negative and positive feelings.

The proposed program is illustrated as a flow chart below.



**Innovation**

There is limited number of programs relating to using play for children in special school setting. More work is needed to determine the effectiveness of play-based developmental programs in facilitating the development and learning of children with developmental disabilities.

Unlike child-centered play therapy (a commonly-used approach in working with children using therapeutic verbal responses such as tracking behavior and reflecting feelings), Theraplay is a play-based approach with very limited use of language. With this characteristic as being non-verbal, Theraplay may be more effective in meeting the needs of children with developmental disabilities. Given that Theraplay is also an evidence-based approach (as shown in the literature), our school would like to test the effectiveness of this form of play approach in working with our special needs children. We are aware that we have very limited knowledge in this form of play therapy; hence, we have invited a play therapist who has specialized training in Theraplay to be our collaborator (as well as a consultant) for this project. We hope that this project may widen the perspective of our staff, as well as educators and specialists in the field, in using play in different forms when working with special needs children.

**Extent of teachers' and principals' involvement**

Name /Post	Extent of involvement / Role
<b>School Personnel</b>	
Principal	As a Financial Controller to oversee the whole project
Senior Teacher 1	As a Project Administrator, administers the project fitting the general school operations (such as teaching time-tables/school calendar); reports to QEF for administration; and chairs meetings
Senior Teacher 2	As a Knowledge Management Leader to monitor the intranet staff sharing portal
School Social Worker	As a Project Coordinator, Coordinates Train-the-trainers programs and supervision Runs individual and group sessions Runs parent-child follow-up sessions Receives training and supervision

Name /Post	Extent of involvement / Role
Speech Therapist	Receives training and supervision Conducts Pre/Post-program assessments Runs individual sessions
Occupational Therapist and Educational Psychologist	As advisors for programs, conduct pre- and post-program assessments
3-5 Teachers	Receive training and supervision Run individual and group sessions Share the duties of Program Assistant
<b>Collaborator</b>	
Professor Angela Siu	Provides training, consultancy and supervision to our staff involves in the program Evaluates program effectiveness Serves as Consultant / Trainer

CV of Professor Angela SIU

Prof. Angela Siu is Assistant Professor at the Department of Educational Psychology in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is a registered Clinical Psychologist of the Hong Kong Psychological Society, and a Psychological Associate of the College of Psychologists of Ontario, Canada. She is also a certified Theraplay Therapist with the Theraplay Institute in Chicago, and Play Therapy Supervisor under the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy. She has served as psychologist in various clinical and educational settings. Prof. Siu was awarded the Young Researcher Award 2009 and Faculty Exemplary Teaching Award 2008-09 in CUHK.

**Implementation plan with timeline:**

Project duration: November 2011 – October 2013

Schedule:

Month Description	2011					2012												2013										
	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No of Months				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Recruitment for 0.5 supply teacher													*															
Train-the-trainers programs																												
Purchase of Equipment																												
Consultant's supervisions																												
Individual Play-based Programs																												
Group Play-based Programs (#/4 batch)				1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2				3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4					
Pre/Post Tests (Quantitative/Qualitative) (#/4 batch)				1&2	1&2		1				2				3&4	3&4			3				4					
Parent-child sessions in Follow-up Stages																												
Data Analysis																												
Content production for Internal Staff Sharing Portal																												
Program Evaluation																												
Preparation for Dissemination																												

\*whereas necessary



**Expected deliverables and outcomes***Expected tangible deliverables:*

## (1) School-based products:

- A new evidence-based program developed for junior grade students.
- Teaching materials for in-house use.
- An e-book will be produced describing the activities used in the program. It will be made available to parents/teachers/specialist staff interested in working with children at various developmental abilities.

## (2) Student-based products:

- Personal growth records for the Students in the platform of electronic student learning portfolio (SLP)
- Enrich the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the students involved.

*Expected intangible deliverables:*

- (1) Enhance teacher-student relationship
- (2) Develop the school culture of encouraging “whole person development”
- (3) Enhance home-school collaboration

**Budget**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Item description and calculation</b>	<b>HKS</b>
Staff cost	0.5 Supply teacher (non-graduate) monthly pay (\$19,945x0.5 x 24 months x 1.05 (MPF))	251,307
Equipment	Surveillance system 1. 16CH Real Time MPEG-4 Digital Disk Recorder 2. 2 System/ Combination Cameras 3. 2 Microphones 4. 2 Colour Monitors 5. System Controller 6. Amplifier 7. External Hard Disk Drive for Data Back up Plus Installation fee	^36,693
General expenses	Program Materials	4,000
	E-book Publication	4,000
	Standardized tools for evaluating program effectiveness	3,000
Contingency	Contingency	1,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>300,000</b>

^ estimation of the cost, if the real cost is exceeded the budget. Topping-up will be made by the school.

**Justifications for 0.5 supply teacher (non-graduate):**

In average, each teacher takes up 30 lessons/sessions weekly. For requesting a 0.5 Supply (non-graduate), we can release a teacher for at least 15 sessions to take up the role in leading group sessions, individual sessions and holding the duties as program assistant.

The role of program assistant is needed to carry out the following tasks during the project period:

- arrange details of the programs.
- oversee the program.
- conduct pre- and post-program assessments, including observations and parent interviews.
- serve as facilitator /assistant of the programs.
- process the student data (including video clips – over 800 hours) for staff sharing portal and dissemination to parents.

**Justifications for Equipment:**

A surveillance system installed in our school serves several purposes. First, this may facilitate the supervision process as monitoring through internet is more flexible. This may reduce the travelling time of the supervisor as the surveillance can be carried out via internet which means the consultant can view the live practice in our School in Aberdeen where she can work in her office in the CUHK. It will be easier to get feedback from supervision immediately. Second, a quality videotaping (for data analysis and for sharing the progress with staff and parents) is also important. The minimal time for rendering the video clips, the quality and file size of both audio-visual recordings are concerns for managing such a project holding at least 800-hour audio-visual data. Therefore, the cost-effectiveness for this high-end equipment is justified for promising the quality of the products. Last but not the least, our school Information technology development team and the IT technician will also provide assistance and support for making good use of the equipment to provide internal dissemination of the program to our staff and parents.

**Asset Usage Plan**

Category	Item/ Description	No. of Units	Total Cost	Proposed Plan for Deployment
Audio and video equipment	Digital Disk Recorder	1	4693	For facilitating the i-play programs in future and education purposes in the school
Office equipment	System / Combination Camera	2	14000	Same as above
Audio and video equipment	Microphones	2	3000	Same as above
Computer hardware	Colour Monitors	2	3000	Same as above
Office equipment	System Controller	1	7000	Same as above
Audio and video equipment	Amplifier	1	3000	Same as above
Computer hardware	External Hard Disk Drive for Data Back up	1	2000	Same as above

**Report Submission Schedule**

My school commits to submit proper reports in strict accordance with the following schedule:

Project Management		Financial Management	
Type of Report and covering period	Report due date	Type of Report and covering period	Report due date
Progress Report 1 Nov 2011 – 31 Oct 2012	30 November 2012	Interim Financial Report 1 Nov 2011 – 31 Oct 2012	30 November 2012
Final Report 1 Nov 2011 – 31 Oct 2013	31 Jan 2014	Final Financial Report 1 Nov 2012 – 31 Oct 2013	31 Jan 2014

**Evaluation parameters and method**

Evaluation on program effectiveness will be done using standardized measures and observation. Data are collected at pre- and post-program periods.

*Standardized measures*

Children's social responsiveness will be evaluated using the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantio & Gruber, 2005), a standardized measure that covers various dimensions of interpersonal behavior, communication, and repetitive/stereotypic behavior that are characteristic of children with special needs. Each participating child will be evaluated by two teachers.

Children's self-concept will be examined using the Joseph Picture Self-Concept Scale (Joseph, 2004). This scale is a standardized measure for assessing self-concept in children at preschool level. Given the intellectual abilities of the students in our school, this scale can provide a means for us to recruit potential students into the program and to assess their performance at different time points. Each participating child will be arranged to complete this scale at pre-/post-program periods. We are aware that these are standardized measures and our specialist staff will be responsible for the administration and interpretation of the test results

*Observations*

Observations will be done at pre- and post-program periods, as well as during session. An observation checklist will be developed specifically for the purpose of our program. At pre- and post-program periods, two staff members in our team will be arranged to record each child's social behavior at certain time intervals. Sessions will be videotaped for further analysis about the children's progress.

**Sustainability of the outcomes of the project**

Since the programs within the project will be under intensive supervision by the collaborator, we would seek her continuous support when necessary. We will use staff development fund for further supervision after the completion of the project. However, the involved staff will carry out the group sessions in the school multiple intelligence lessons to serve our junior primary school students in future years to fulfill the school development plan in encouraging "whole person development" of our students.

For individual sessions, our staff will use "Play" as a mean to facilitate students' learning in those individual Speech Therapy lessons for all students and Resource teaching lessons for students with autism. School social workers who are co-working with a team of school specialist staff will provide individual play sessions for suitable cases and also parent-child sessions as long as appropriate in their daily practice.

The products like students' IEP and personal growth records in SLP will facilitate teachers in coming years to have better understanding of the students when they will be in the years of adolescence.

**Dissemination/Promotion**

A web-based booklet on play-based activities for educators, staff specialists, and parents working with children with developmental disabilities will be developed and launched in our

school website. Dissemination invited by QEF and EDB is most welcomed. In addition, in-house dissemination for staff will be provided during staff development day in the year of 2012-2013.

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