

# Analysis of Playing for Those with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Late Childhood

– On play therapy –

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This study examines the appearance of play activity, changes in the quality of make-believe playing, switching to games involving rules from make-believe playing, and changes in the strong-preference behavior of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and in the quality of such changes. The method consisted of an analysis of recordings based on a longitudinal observation of children with ASD from the age of four years and seven months to six years and four months. The results were as follows: (1) pretend play changed to mirroring the therapists' pretend play example activity, (2) make-believe playing can be divided into periods involving viewing one's self as a "doll," the period of such "doll" perception, and the period in which the child is aware of taking part in role-playing, (3) games with rules can also be divided into two periods, and these show that make-believe playing and games with rules have periods in common, and (4) the strong-preference behavior of those with ASD can be changed to something more social in nature, through changes in playing activity. This study shows that there is a period common to make-believe playing and games with rules, as one child became aware of being involved in role-playing and the existence of therapists in this period. In addition, this study shows that the strong-preference behavior of ASD can be changed by an adjustment in how playing is conducted as an activity.