

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Information Sheet regarding Weighted Vests and Blankets

Weighted vests and blankets are gaining popularity as they are marketed by claiming to have a calming effect, to improve sleep, to increase attention to the task, etc. These items are readily available to the general public over the internet or in the community despite important safety precautions and considerations for their use not always being shared transparently.

The purpose of this document is to educate and provide basic information to the public regarding weighted vests and blankets. It is not to comment on the effect or therapeutic use of these items with children. The recommendation of a registered occupational therapist is always required for the appropriate and safe use of these items according to the child's profile.

General Precautions on the Use of Weighted Vests and Blankets:

- The informed consent of the parent/guardian must be obtained before use. The child must give his consent/assent to the use of these items on each occasion (verbal, gestural, or other, according to their communication skills).
- Consult a health professional to determine if a contraindication exists, such as a respiratory, cardiac, skin, circulatory, immune (allergy), hypotonia, hypertonia, epilepsy and/or other condition.
- An attentive and responsible adult must always supervise the child.
- They must never be used as a punishment or as a restraint.
- The child must have the cognitive and physical abilities to be able to remove the weighted vest or blanket themselves, at any time, should they wish to (for example: if they are not comfortable, too warm, it is too heavy, or for some other reason).
- They must never cover the child's head, face or neck.
- The supervising adult must always be able to see the child's vital signs.
- Do not roll up the child or allow them to roll themselves up in the weighted blanket.
- A registered occupational therapist must be consulted to prescribe the details of use such as weight, duration and frequency as these should be individualized to the child and the desired outcome.

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