

# RePlay *for Kids*

because every child needs to play



## 2023

### PROGRAM SUMMARY & ANNUAL REPORT

[www.replayforkids.org](http://www.replayforkids.org)



@replay4kids



@replayforkids

# MISSION

Our mission is to increase the availability of toys and assistive devices for children with disabilities. We repair, adapt and distribute toys and assistive devices free of charge. In so doing, we strive to raise awareness and increase the number and variety of toys and devices available to the children who need them.

**RePlay for Kids** is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, nonprofit. We provide these services at no charge to nonprofit organizations that provide medical, educational or recreational resources for children with disabilities in Northeast Ohio.



Founded in 1999

# WHAT WE DO

Many service organizations in the area purchase specially adapted toys and assistive devices to aid children with disabilities, but due to the limited market, these items are significantly more expensive than their mainstream counterparts. Our partner agencies have limited resources and often cannot afford to replace broken toys or assistive devices. These organizations also lack the personnel with technical knowledge and available time required to modify and repair these devices.

We, at **RePlay for Kids**, provide these organizations free repair and modification services, thereby increasing the number of functioning toys and assistive devices available for children with disabilities.



Over **180** agencies  
and schools helped

# 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.



“ Having these switch adapted toys and vehicles has provided these very young children with opportunities to interact not just with the toys and their environment but has opened up a world of social experiences that was previously inaccessible.

– Medina County Physical Therapist

Over **19,300** toys repaired or adapted in the past 10 years

# TOY WORKSHOPS

**RePlay for Kids** has been hosting informal toy workshops since 1994, but was formally established in 1999 as a nonprofit organization to expand the toy repair and modification effort. We currently host toy workshops several times each month, during which volunteers spend a couple hours repairing and modifying toys and devices. Since we utilize small, portable toolkits, our workshops can be set up in a variety of locations.

## TOY ADAPTATION WORKSHOPS

In these workshops, volunteers adapt mainstream, battery-operated toys by installing a switch cable in parallel with the original switch, allowing the toy to be operated by a variety of alternative switches that can be accessed by children with disabilities.

## TOY REPAIR WORKSHOPS

During these workshops, volunteers work with **RePlay for Kids** guides to repair as many toys and assistive devices as possible. Activities often involve simple repairs and all items are checked for safe operation prior to being returned to the agencies.

## CREATIVE SPACE

In 2021, we opened up our Creative Space in Solon, Ohio. This space has provided opportunities to host workshops for groups that can't host them at their own locations, and also helps us check and process the adapted toys faster.



Over **988** workshops  
in the last 10 years

# COMPANY & GROUP TOY ADAPTING WORKSHOPS



“ I like the hands-on getting something done that will directly benefit a child that needs it. Also, working things out with coworkers that I normally do not work with was fun.

– Corporate workshop volunteer

Many groups, including companies, school clubs, and religious or civic organizations like to participate in fun and educational activities that provide a benefit to society. **RePlay for Kids'** toy workshops are a good match for these groups. Volunteers in the group get to play with toys, learn about how they operate, and provide a needed service for children. Participating in the workshops helps foster teamwork and problem-solving skills. These workshops are a popular option for companies that are having an employee-volunteer day, since we can bring the toys, parts and tools to the workshop location, providing a volunteer opportunity for employees who are unable to go onsite.

Over 20,500 volunteers  
in the last 10 years

# S.T.E.M. SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

**RePlay for Kids** has developed modules to allow schools to hold toy adapting workshops, in which students learn S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) concepts while helping local children with disabilities. The students are taught how to adapt toys so that a child with a disability can use an external switch to activate a battery-operated toy. They open up the toy and learn a little bit about electronics and problem solving, while at the same time providing a community service.



“ **RePlay for Kids** has been instrumental in providing my students with a valuable and rewarding service learning experience.

– *Middle school engineering teacher*

## S.T.E.M. WORKSHOP LOANER KITS

In order to expand the number of S.T.E.M. workshops, **RePlay for Kids** has developed loaner kits that include all the tools (soldering irons, screwdrivers, etc.) and supplies needed to adapt a toy. Teachers that have been trained to lead our toy adapting workshops can request the loaner kits. The loaner kit is delivered to the teacher that is interested in hosting the toy adapting workshop. This arrangement allows more flexibility in the teacher's and students' schedules. The students have about two weeks to adapt the toys, and gives the students the option to work individually or in groups.

**30** schools in **9** Ohio counties hosted S.T.E.M. toy adapting workshops in 2023

## REPLAY @HOME

Some of the therapies and educational activities that are helped with the use of adapted toys, would be even more productive if the children could practice these movements and activities at home. Unfortunately, many children with disabilities do not have access to adapted toys to use at home. **RePlay for Kids** has helped remedy this by providing adapted toys to children who need them through our RePlay @ Home program. Therapists and teachers make requests for the children who could benefit from having adapted toys at home.

“ Thank you so much for adapting Mickey Mouse for our little guy. He is now able to tap the switch on his own whenever he wants Mickey to sing and dance!

- Mom of a child with a disability

## VOLUNTEER @HOME

When the COVID pandemic started, we had to cancel our workshops and find a new way to get toys adapted. Our volunteers stepped up and started adapting toys at home. Once schools switched to remote learning, we began receiving requests to provide adapted toys to the children who could no longer access them at school. We worked with our volunteers to adapt toys at home, and set up a shipping program to get the adapted toys to the kids who needed them. Some of our volunteers have continued to adapt toys at home on a regular basis.



Our services have saved agencies and families over  
**\$1,283,000**  
in the past 10 years



# FAMILY & COMMUNITY TOY ADAPTING WORKSHOPS

In our Family and Community toy adapting workshops, volunteers from the community can adapt toys to be given to local children with disabilities. Also at this workshop, local families that have children with disabilities are encouraged to come and learn how to adapt toys so that their child can operate the toy with an alternate external switch. These families are shown how to adapt a toy, and are sent home with a toolkit that allows them to continue adapting toys at home.

## ADAPTED TOY LENDING LIBRARIES

Some public libraries have toy lending programs, where families can borrow a toy for a couple weeks, allowing a child to play with a wider variety of toys, and for families to identify toys that their child likes before buying one. Some libraries are interested in expanding this concept to families of children with disabilities, by offering adapted toys to loan to families that need them. **RePlay for Kids** is partnering with these libraries by providing them with adapted toys and switches that they can add to their existing toy lending library.



748 switches were assembled and donated last year

# REPLAY RIDE-ON

In this program, volunteers are shown how to adapt a ride-on car so that a young child with a disability can operate it with an accessible switch. Typical children operate these ride-on cars (like the Fisher-Price Power Wheels series) by sitting in them and pressing the pedal with their foot. Children with physical or cognitive disabilities often aren't able to use a foot pedal. These cars can be modified so that a large plate switch can be placed on the steering wheel, and that plate switch can be wired to replace the foot pedal to operate the car. The child then just needs to press the switch to make the car go. This type of adaptation was pioneered by the University of Delaware's "Go Baby Go" program, who found that allowing young children with disabilities to explore their environment produced noticeable improvements in their cognitive and social development.

“ ... being able to go visit elderly neighbors in a battery powered car, the joy these adapted toys/ cars have created has been amazing to see. RePlay has made a difference in these families lives opening up a world of possibilities!



219 ride-on cars were adapted in past 10 years

# TOY REPAIR WORKSHOPS



Agencies and schools that provide services to children with disabilities are often unable to repair their broken assistive or adapted devices. Often, the necessary repairs involve a broken wire or other minor problem that can make an adapted toy, an expensive communication device or a therapeutic device unusable. **RePlay for Kids** holds workshops where technically skilled volunteers repair these devices, which are then returned to the agencies and schools to be used again.

“ Our agency is fortunate to be part of this program. We estimate a savings of \$350-500 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 at a disability agency*


Over **1476** toys have been repaired over the last 10 years

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

 **134**  
Workshops

 **2507**  
Volunteers

 **2111**  
Toys Adapted  
or Repaired

 **748**  
Switches  
Assembled

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Hosted Workshops in our  
new Creative Space

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 **\$176,220**  
Saved by Agencies  
and Families

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Returned to our pre-  
COVID workshop numbers

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Advised volunteers and  
groups around the country  
on ways to adapt toys

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Redesigned and  
updated our website  
([replayforkids.org](http://replayforkids.org))

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**24** years of helping  
children with disabilities

# ANNUAL ADAPTED TOY GIVEAWAY

At the end of each year, **RePlay for Kids** invites representatives from our partner agencies and schools to come to our toy distribution events and select adapted toys to use with the children in their programs. They choose from all the toys that our volunteers adapted during the past year, allowing the agencies to find the ones that are most appropriate for their clients.



“ Every year, I have the pleasure of witnessing the magic of speech pathologists, teachers, parents, and children flooding our building to receive new adapted toys courtesy of **RePlay for Kids**. The energy is palpable and the ripple effect is then huge – as an SLP myself, I work with these schools who acquire the toys and I see them being used every day in the buildings.

For many of our students, these toys are their first ability to independently direct their own fun. For other students, they are a gateway to being able to learn how to use a switch to communicate. **RePlay for Kids** brings the magic of play to so many children and we are eternally grateful that they make that possible!

– Local speech language pathologist

2,131 adapted toys given away  
in 2023

# ONLINE ACCESS

For people outside of Northeast Ohio, or for those who otherwise aren't able to attend a workshop to learn how to adapt toys, **RePlay for Kids** has been building an online repository of toy adapting instructions and videos. Our inventory of adapted toys is also available online.

## TOY ADAPTING INSTRUCTIONS DATABASE

Step-by-step instructions for adapting a wide variety of battery-operated toys can be found on our website:

[replayforkids.org/info/toyadaptinginstructions/](https://replayforkids.org/info/toyadaptinginstructions/)



## TOY ADAPTING VIDEOS

Videos showing the general steps in adapting a toy can be found on our YouTube channel:

[youtube.com/replayforkids](https://youtube.com/replayforkids)



## ONLINE DATABASE OF ADAPTED TOYS

Once our toys are adapted at workshops, they are bar-coded and entered into a database that therapists and teachers can access online. This allows them to select toys that are appropriate for the children they teach and serve.



Toy adapting instructions  
available online for **198** different toys

# AGENCIES, SCHOOLS AND WORKSHOP HOSTS

## COUNTY MAP



## AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS SERVED

- County Boards of Developmental Disabilities
- Other Disability and Public Agencies (United Cerebral Palsy, Cleveland Sight Center)
- Children's Hospitals
- School Districts

## WORKSHOP HOSTS

- Colleges & Universities
- High Schools
- Middle Schools
- Libraries
- Churches & Synagogues
- Service Organizations (Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs)
- Businesses – small, medium and large

107 groups hosting  
workshops in 2023

# 2023 FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Akron Community Foundation                     | DJ Family Foundation              |
| Ashland County<br>Community Foundation         | GPD Employees Foundation          |
| Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund                | Greg Heidelberger Charitable Fund |
| Cavaliers Community Foundation                 | Irving and Gloria Fine Foundation |
| Chaffee Family Foundation                      | Matthew's Lending Library         |
| Community Foundation<br>of Lorain County       | Musson Foundation                 |
| Community Foundation of the<br>Mahoning Valley | Richman Brothers Foundation       |
| Crane Fund for Widows and<br>Children          | Stark Community Foundation        |
|  | Stolier Foundation                |
|  | Swagelok Foundation               |
|  | Willard Stephenson Foundation     |

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

Bedford Nissan - sponsor  
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Leikin Motor Co. - sponsor  
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Nordson Corp.  
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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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