



Children at Willowbrook State School happily bounce on their new "therapeutic toy," an air mattress. The new device was developed in England. S.I. Advance Photo by Tony Carannante

New equipment at Willowbrook

This inflation is therapeutic

A type of therapeutic equipment for handicapped children and adults was introduced yesterday at Willowbrook State School.

The National Health Service in England acclaims the four-piece acquisition called "the inflatables," "the most significant new development" in the field, according to Miss Hanne Marstrand, president of Marstrand Lewis Group, Inc., the English manufacturer and distributor, who was in Staten Island yesterday to set it up.

The "inflatables" consists of a 10-by-10-foot air mattress and three large inflatable tubes brightly colored red, blue and yellow. Children sprawl on lie on and straddle the objects.

It is supposed to create a "soft environment" which takes children out of their withdrawal, frequently abetted by the "hard" institutional atmosphere which frightens them.

The process of playing develops motor, perceptual skills, muscular development

and social interaction.

Persons of all ages with Down's syndrome and other types of retardation, brain damage, cerebral palsy, the deaf and dumb and blind as well as the artistic children benefit by it.

The equipment was researched and developed for three years in the Royal College of Art in London.

The equipment was used by 15 children on the first day. However, all groups will make use of it. It is installed in a large recreation room.