A covering apparatus or play tent is designed to sit disposed around a suspended platform swing. The tent is attached to a platform swing. The swing which is suspended by a rope from the ceiling has the ability to move forward, backward, laterally, and to rotate in both directions. Thus, the occupants have the ability to experience all of these movements while remaining inside the tent that is attached to the swing. The tent can be made of lightweight canvas and has four isosceles trapezoidal sides with one side acting as a door. The door has a small inset window made of mesh with a material flap for closure. The tent may have both a ceiling and a floor. The outside of the tent has three small panels of felt which are attached to the tent for use with stories and literacy concepts.
COVERING APPARATUS OR TENT FOR A PLATFORM SWING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates generally to enhancing the therapeutic use of suspended swings and particularly in an educational setting for children. In this way, a suspended platform swing that is generally used for balance, kinesthetic and sensory stimulation can be enhanced and its uses expanded by employing an accessory such as a tent to its general frame. In addition, the application of the swing can be expanded to include meta-learning by incorporating felt panels on the outside of the tent so that children can participate in interactive learning through the use of felt shapes that correspond to stories, songs and other learning concepts.

[0003] 2. Discussion of the Related Art

[0004] It is well known in the art that children enjoy the sensation of swinging. They also garner therapeutic benefit from using swings as evidenced by Brown (U.S. Pat. No. 5,611,761), Cleveenger (U.S. Pat. No. 5,101,522) and Groth (U.S. Pat. No. 3,130,969). Swings challenge and develop the neurological systems associated with balance, kinesthetic sense, vestibular sense and sensory integration. Swings have been used on playgrounds for the enjoyment of physical play and also to facilitate healthy neurological development in all children. Recently, swings have been used in clinical and school therapeutic environments as evidenced by Groth.

[0005] Within the school environment, children play in a variety of ways including using structural playhouses for physical and imaginative play. They often find safety and security within the confines of these structures. Children also have the ability to review cognitive concepts while they play imaginatively while using a collapsible playhouse such as those delineated in Conrad (U.S. Pat. No. 4,992,068) and Brumbach et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 550,803).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The disclosures discussed above do not address the benefits of meta-learning by combining the concepts of sensory-motor learning with the learning of cognitive concepts. The present invention combines both types of learning by offering children the opportunity for sensory play while also cementing cognitive concepts offered through stories, songs, and other learning activities.

[0007] Children affix educational shapes to the felt panels associated with a tent that is attached to a platform swing, then climb onto the swing and through pretend play incorporate the movement of the swing into the action of the story, songs or other learning activities. In addition, children who require therapeutic intervention for sensory needs are able to enjoy the safety and security provided by the tent and the gentle swinging motion afforded by the suspended swing. Children with typically developing nervous systems may also enjoy the safety and security they feel as they climb inside a tent that is attached to a swing.

[0008] The present invention provides a tent that is collapsible, suspended on a platform swing, and incorporates elements of meta-learning on its sides by means of storyboards.

[0009] The present invention also relates to a tent suspended on a platform swing, comprising four isosceles trapezoidal sides, one of which acts as a door, and whose other three sides have three trapezoidal panels of felt on the outside which are attached to the tent for the use with educational concepts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a platform swing with a tent attached according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a top view of a platform swing with the tent attached according to the embodiment of FIG. 1.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a front view of the tent attached to the platform swing according to the embodiment of FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a side view of the tent attached to the platform swing according to the embodiment of FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a perspective view showing the tent door in a raised position according to the embodiment of FIG. 1.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a top view of the tent prior to being attached to a platform swing.

[0016] FIG. 7 is a front view of the tent showing tabs for attachment to the platform swing and the door of the tent in a raised position.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a side view of the tent showing the requisite tabs for attachment to the platform swing and a felt panel used for teaching concepts.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of the tent with the tabs for attachment to the platform swing and felt panels for teaching concepts.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a view of the base of the tent with tabs available to attach the tent to the base of a platform swing.

[0020] FIG. 11 is a close up view of a top tent corner and the top tabs for attachment.

[0021] FIG. 12 is a close up view of the side tabs.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0022] A covering apparatus or tent is disclosed for being attached around a platform swing. Preferred embodiments of the covering apparatus or tent on the platform swing will now be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0023] FIG. 1 illustrates a tent 100 connected to a swing. The front side 132 of the tent 100 shows an inset doorway 126 disposed between side seams of the tent 100. A door 122 which is formed by a flap of the tent covers this inset doorway 126. The door 122 is composed of malleable textile such as canvas making it well adapted to rolling up. It is attached to the front side 132 of the tent 100 by being stitched to the upper end of the front side 132, making it well adapted to being easily rolled and unrolled manually. The tent of the present invention comprises four trapezoidal sides 120 including a front side 132, a square fabric base 118 and a square fabric ceiling 116.

[0024] The door 122 is able to remain in a rolled up position through the use of a Velcro type hook and eye closure tab 150 that is located on the outside upper portion of the door 122. The tab 150 attaches to a corresponding Velcro type hook and loop segment on the underside of the tent door 122. When the tent door 122 is properly rolled, these two Velcro type hook and loop closures meet and satisfactorily maintain the tent door 122 in a rolled up position. Conversely, when the door is unrolled and resting in a flat position, the Velcro type hook and loop tabs 152 which are located on the medial border of
the front of the tent 126 match with corresponding Velcro type hook and loop tabs on the underside of the tent door 122.

[0025] FIGS. 2, 5, and 6 illustrate various top views of the tent 100. The corners of the trapezoidal sides 120 have attachable tabs 112 stitched on which are securely attached to guide ropes by tightly fitting the rope in-between the cusps of the tabs. The tabs 112 are securely fastened around the ropes with soft Velcro type hook and loop closures.

[0026] FIG. 3 illustrates a frontal view of the tent 100. It has a flexible door 130 made of lightweight durable fabric. The door 130 is able to hang down and remained secured by Velcro type hook and loop tabs 150 on the border of the front side 132 of the tent or it can be moved into a rolled up position 122. It is held in this position by the Velcro type hook and loop tab 150 that corresponds to a similar Velcro type hook and loop tab on the underside of the rolled tent door 122. The door 122 may be layered on top of the frontal side edges 132 or may comprise the entirety of the front side 132.

[0027] FIG. 4 illustrates a side 120 of the tent 100 having the felt panel 128 attached onto the fabric of the tent 100. The felt panel 128 may be any shape including trapezoidal or rectangular and the felt panel 128 enables shapes or story boards to be attached to the tent for children to interact with. The felt panel 128 is attached to the side of the tent 120 through the use of Velcro type hook and loop tabs 153 placed on the underside of the felt that correspond to the same type of Velcro type hook and loop tabs that are attached directly to the side 122 of the tent.

[0028] FIG. 5 illustrates a perspective view of a topside 116 of the tent and the tabs 110 attached to it. A pair of tabs 110 is stitched onto the tent ceiling 116 at the area closest to the upper corners. The tabs 110 are made of malleable material such as the fabric of the tent. They are depicted in FIGS. 5 and 11 as having right angles so as to illustrate how they would conform to the swing support 106.

[0029] FIG. 11 provides a detailed view of a corner of the tent ceiling 116 and shows the relative positions of the tabs 110. The tabs 110 tie around the suspension ropes 104 thereby securing the tent 100 to the platform swing support 106. FIGS. 5 and 11 show the attachable tabs 110 as having 90 degree angles only for diagrammatic purposes. They are entirely malleable and can be made solely of hook and loop textile elements.

[0030] FIGS. 7, 8, and 9 illustrate the tent 100 prior to being attached to the swing for structural support. Side attachments 112 are depicted in their relative placement on the corner edges of the tent, as are the top tabs 110 depicted in their relative placement on the fabric ceiling 116.

[0031] As shown in FIG. 9, a window 124 can be inset into the door to view children while they are using the tent 100 to make sure they remain safe and secure. On at least one of the tent sides 120, is a felt panel 128 onto which meta-learning elements such as story book excerpts may be applied.

[0032] FIG. 10 illustrates that the floor of the tent 118 has four corner attachable tabs 114 stitched into the floor fabric 118. The corner attachable tabs 114 help the tent 100 remain attached to the platform base 108 by attaching them to hook and loop squares fastened to the swing platform base 108.

[0033] The tent 100 is preferably lightweight and collapsible and constructed of washable fabric that is durable. The tent 100 may also be made of non-collapsible material such as lightweight and sturdy firm plastic which would fit inside the structure of the swing support 106 and the swing base 108 and the guide ropes 104. The tent 100 may also function as a coverlet around the swing support 106 and the swing base 108 and the guide ropes 104 with the fabric coming up and around the swing base 108 and gathering the fabric of the tent 100 together above the swing support 106 to secure it. It is recommended that there be no slack between the ropes of the swing and sides of the tent to prevent any limbs or a head of a person from becoming stuck between the rope and the tent. The tent 100 may also be permanently attached around the swing structure thereby eliminating the need for any Velcro type hook and loop tabs.

[0034] FIG. 12 provides a detailed view of the top corner of the tent 100 structure wherein two trapezoidal sides 120 meet the fabric ceiling 116. The top tabs 110 for attachment have been omitted so as to clearly show the tabs 112 for attachment. The side tab 112 comprises an outer rectangular pair of members whose distance from one another is smaller than the diameter of the guide rope 104 such that the guide rope 104 must be forced into the tab 112 after which its removal is difficult unless pressure is applied vertically away from the stitching of the tab 112.

[0035] The guide ropes 104 help support a platform swing base 108 by being attached through the base 108 and the lips 104 of the guide ropes 104 are typically knotted on the underside of the base 108. The guide ropes 104 also pass through an upper circular swing support 106. The tent ceiling 116 has tabs 110 stitched on its corners made of textile. The tabs 110 attach around the guide ropes 104 passing through the circular swing support 106 by looping over the support 106 and are attached around the ropes 104. The top tabs 110 provide the tent 100 with the ability to hang freely while remaining securely attached to the platform swing.

[0036] It is to be understood that although the present invention has been described with regard to preferred embodiments thereof, various other embodiments and variants may occur to those of the skilled in the art, which are within the scope and spirit of the invention, and such other embodiments and variants are intended to be covered by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A tent assembly comprising:
   a swinging having a substantially shaped rectangular floor and a substantially shaped circular ceiling and four guide ropes connected in between by means of being threaded through four bored holes in said floor and knotted on the underside of said floor threaded through four bored holes in said ceiling and connected to a suspension cable, and
   a fabric tent shell comprising of four substantially shaped trapezoidal fabric side walls, each side wall connected to an adjacent side wall in side-by-side relationship, and a substantially shaped rectangular fabric floor connected along a lower edge of said side walls, and
   a substantially shaped rectangular fabric ceiling connected along a higher edge of said side walls, and
   a pair of hook and loop closures attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around four guide ropes to connect to said swing, and
   a second pair of hook and loop closures attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed on said swing floor, a third pair of hook and loop closures attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around the guide ropes and swing ceiling.

2. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 1, wherein said tent assembly has at least one of the side walls attached to said tent
A tent assembly as set forth in claim 1, wherein said side walls comprise of a mesh screen material.

4. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 1, wherein one of said side walls includes a substantially shaped trapezoidal window.

5. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 1, wherein one of the side walls includes a substantially shaped rectangular felt panel.

6. A tent assembly comprising:
   a. a swing having a floor and a ceiling and a plurality of guide ropes connected in between by means of being threaded through a plurality of bored holes in said floor and knotted on the underside of said floor and threaded through a plurality of bored holes in said ceiling and connected to a suspension cable, and
   b. a fabric tent shell comprising of a plurality of fabric side walls, each side wall connected to an adjacent side wall in side-by-side relationship, and
   c. a floor connected along a lower edge of said side walls, and a ceiling connected along a higher edge of said side walls, and
   d. a first connection mechanism attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around the guide ropes and swing ceiling.

7. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 6, wherein said tent assembly has at least one of the side walls attached to said tent shell solely at said side wall’s upper seam thereby being able to be rolled up for access to said tent’s interior.

8. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 6, wherein said side walls comprise of a mesh screen material.

9. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 6, wherein at least one of said side walls includes at least one window.

10. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 6, wherein at least one of the side walls includes at least one felt panel.

11. A tent for attaching to a hanging swing comprising:
   a. a substantially shaped rectangular fabric floor connected along a lower edge of said side walls, and
   b. a substantially shaped rectangular fabric ceiling connected along a higher edge of said side walls, and
   c. a pair of hook and loop closures attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around the swing, and
   d. a second pair of hook and loop closures attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around the swing.

12. A tent as set forth in claim 11, wherein said tent has at least one of the side wall attached to said tent shell solely at said side wall’s upper seam thereby being able to be rolled up for access to said tent’s interior.

13. A tent as set forth in claim 11, wherein said side walls comprise of a mesh screen material.

14. A tent as set forth in claim 11, wherein one of said side walls includes a substantially shaped trapezoidal window.

15. A tent as set forth in claim 11, wherein one of the side walls includes a substantially shaped rectangular felt panel.

16. A tent for attaching to a swing comprising:
   a. a fabric tent shell comprising of a plurality of substantially shaped rectangular fabric side walls, each side wall connected to an adjacent side wall in side-by-side relationship, and
   b. a floor connected along a lower edge of said side walls, and a ceiling connected along a higher edge of said side walls, and
   c. a first connection mechanism attached to the tent shell constructed and disposed around the guide ropes and swing ceiling.

17. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 16, wherein said tent has at least one of a side wall attached to said tent shell solely at said side wall’s upper seam thereby being able to be rolled up for access to said tent’s interior.

18. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 16, wherein said side walls comprise of a mesh screen material.

19. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 16, wherein at least one of said side walls includes at least one window.

20. A tent assembly as set forth in claim 16, wherein at least one of the side walls includes at least one felt panel.

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