



Children's Therapy Connection

Washington Health System Children's Therapy Center

Fall 2021 * Volume 25, Issue 4

The Power to Change Children's Lives

Occupational Therapy..... 1,2

Staff Milestones..... 1

CTC Stars.....3

Physical Therapy4

Speech Therapy.....5

Join the CTC Team!.....6

Social Media.....6

New Health Insurance?.....6



<https://whs.org/care-treatment/childrens-care/childrens-therapy-center/>

Design, layout and editing by:
Cathleen Gompers

Occupational Therapy

An OT's guide to Holiday Toy Shopping

Submitted by Julia Kuehn, MOT, OTR/L

With the holidays fast approaching, you may have started thinking about different toys that may be appropriate for the little ones in your life. Play is one of the most important occupations that a child engages in as play teaches children about the world around them, develops a child's fine motor and visual motor skills, and develops a child's sense of curiosity and creativity. Occupational therapists are experts in play and the ways play promotes the development of young children.

Ask any of the following questions to evaluate if the toy you may be considering buying is age appropriate for the little ones in your life. If you can answer 'yes' to any of these questions, the toy you are considering is probably worth the buy:

1. *Is the toy safe and age appropriate?* Look at the age range of the toy and consider the age of the child you are buying the toy for. If the age range is below the child's current age, they may tire of it easily. If the age range is above the child's current age, it may be too challenging for the child's current play skills and could also pose a

safety risk (small children should not be left unsupervised with small toy pieces)

2. *Is the toy durable?* Is it visually appealing? Can it be washed? If pieces of the toy are broken, can it be easily fixed or would the repairs be costly? Is it a toy that your child will want to show their friends or leave at home?



(Continued on page 2)

Staff Milestones!

The following CTC staff have reached a milestone in their years of service with the Washington Health System!

25 years

Cathleen Gompers MS,CCC/SLP
Lead Speech-Language Pathologist

Melissa Mosesso-Rousseau, OTR
Coordinator of Occupational Therapy

20 years

Steve Datovech, Director



Occupational Therapy

(Continued from page 1)

An OT's guide to Holiday Toy Shopping

3. *Are there multiple ways the toy can be played with?* Toys with multiple uses encourage kids to get creative with how they play. Think: blocks can be built into towers and walls, built up and knocked over, lined up to make cars or trains, and can even be used as “toy food” when playing in a kitchen. A sandbox could be used to build, scoop, pour, and hide objects in. The creative possibilities are endless!
4. *Does the toy appeal to several senses?* Toys with multiple colors, sounds, lights, textures, and moving parts can hold a child's attention for a long time. These toys are often easy to use, easy to clean, and encourage kids to use their senses to explore. Moving parts also encourage hand-eye and fine motor coordination.
5. *Can the toy be used in multiple places?* Bonus points for toys that can be transported! Crayons, markers, and dry-erase boards are great as they can be brought almost anywhere and encourage children to utilize their fine motor and writing skills as they play. Sidewalk chalk is another great tool as it provides a sensory experience as well as a new medium (the driveway, a chalkboard, the sidewalk, etc.) for children to explore.
6. *Can the toy be used in multiple positions?* Can your child engage with the toy while standing, sitting, or lying down? For example, stacking rings can be moved around so that baby and infants have to stretch their bodies to engage with the toy and move their heads to find different toy parts.



7. *Does the toy involve the use of both hands?* Think construction toys, craft kits, musical toys, conjoining toys, Legos, etc. These types of toys encourage children to use both of their hands which help develop coordination.
8. *Does the toy encourage activity and movement?* These types of toys are important as they encourage the development of the large muscles, as well as the coordination necessary to navigate through life. Think: balls, toss and catch sets, bicycles and riding toys, jump ropes, and toys that encourage children to get up and dance.
9. *Does the toy promote communication and interaction?* Dress-up clothes or costumes, playhouses, kitchen sets, work benches and tools, puppets, etc. can encourage reciprocal play, as well as the social skills necessary for engaging in everyday life.
10. *Is the toy worth the cost?* Most often, the best “toys” are items that you may already have at home – colorful plastic cups can be stacked and sorted, plastic containers and lids can be used as puzzles, dish towels can be used for peek-a-boo, coffee cans can turn into piggy banks, and chocolate pudding could be used as finger paint. If the toy you are considering buying could be substituted with something you already have at home, it may not be worth its cost.

The right toy should be fun and support a child's development. If you are having extra difficulty picking out a toy for the little one in your life, talk to your pediatric occupational therapist about toy suggestions that support their individual strengths and needs for the “just-right” challenge during play time.



This article was adapted from the American Occupational Therapy Association's Toy Shopping Tip Sheet.

<https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Patients-Clients/ChildrenAndYouth/Toy-Shopping.aspx>

CTC Superstars!

★ Physical Therapy
Michael Molinaro ★



Michael is our PT star! Michael has been working hard during physical therapy and has accomplished so many goals. Michael is now stronger in his trunk and core muscles and he is walking more consistently with his heels down. Michael is working on improving his posture, getting stronger and stretching his tight muscles. Michael enjoys being silly and always has a good story! Keep up the good work Michael!



★ Occupational Therapy
Brayden & Colton Althoff ★

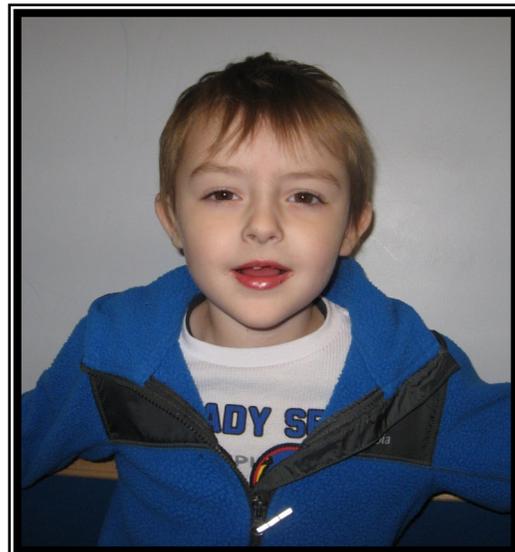


You're not seeing double, Brayden and Colton are OT stars! These brothers have been working very hard to learn their letters, numbers, and how to write their names! Brayden loves to pretend to be the therapist and teach Miss Theresa. Brayden knows all things dinosaurs and is always up for playing games. Colton is a hard worker, who is always cheerful and fashionable. These brothers are adjusting great to kindergarten. You will be the best big brothers a baby could ever have! Way to go, Colton and Brayden! Keep up the great work!



★ Speech Therapy
Liam McIntire

Liam has made so much progress in speech this year! He is now working hard on learning kindergarten skills and has been making friends at school. He is learning how to use a speech-generating device to communicate with us, and he has so much to tell us! Liam is doing a great job of completing table tasks and he is an absolute JOY to work with.



Physical Therapy

Adaptive Equipment: What are my Options?

Submitted by: Lisa Wagers, PT, DPT

There is a wide variety of adaptive equipment that can be beneficial to your child for a variety of different reasons that can help make your child more independent with every day activities. Most adaptive equipment is covered by most insurances pending on your child's needs and diagnoses. All equipment would be trialed before recommendations would be made.

Gait Trainer:

Provides required support to allow your child to walk independently in all environments.



Stroller: Has your child grown out of a commercial stroller but does not have the endurance, strength, or safety awareness to be able to walk in crowded environments or long distances? An adaptive stroller can provide appropriate support for your child for family outings while keeping them safe.

Activity Chair: Is a multifunctional piece of equipment that can provide a supportive and safe seating option for meal time, or school/play time for your child.



Bath Chair: Provides support for your child in the bath tub if they are unable to sit by themselves or safely in water.



Stander: Allows a child that is unable to stand by themselves have time in the upright position while putting weight through their legs.



Adaptive Tricycle: An alternative option for a child that does not have the strength, balance or coordination required to ride a standard tricycle or bicycle.

Enclosure Bed:

This will keep your child safe at night while everyone is sleeping. If your child is an elopement or fall risk, an enclosure bed is a great option to make sure everyone gets a great nights rest.



Adaptive Car Seat/

Booster Seat: Provides increase trunk, pelvic, and head support for individuals that continue to require the extra support after they have outgrown their infant/toddler car seats.



Please reach out to the Physical Therapy Department with any questions about adaptive equipment, 724-942-6100.

Speech Therapy

Manual Mimicry Cues Supporting Speech Sound Development

Submitted by ;Mallorie Piazza and Meghan Powell, SLP Graduate Student Clinicians, Duquesne University

Talking is a very tricky task!

Learning to make sounds is really complicated! First we create the idea of what we want to say. Then, another part of our brain tells us how to put the words together. Yet another part of the brain tells the muscles how to move. These muscles include those that coordinate movement of the face and tongue as well as breathing. Sometimes this process doesn't develop easily for a child, and they may need a little help learning how to talk. Whether your child has an articulation disorder on a specific sound or has a diagnosis of Childhood Apraxia of Speech, manual mimicry cues can be used to increase how well your child talks.

What is Manual Mimicry?

Manual mimicry is a type of teaching tool that provides visual feedback to the child producing the sound. It was developed from the idea that the hand will mirror 3 aspects of the sound:

- 1.) How we want the articulators (e.g., tongue, lips) to move
- 2.) The speed of their movement (e.g., fast, or slow)
- 3.) The amount of tension that should be produced for that sound (e.g., loose, or tight)

Example: sound /p/

These images show the initial and final placement of the manual mimicry cue for the sound "puh". The hand begins by mirroring the lip closure (Image 1). The release of the finger's

outward mirrors the opening of the lips and release of air (Image 2). As the clinician produces the sound, the hand movement is done at the same time.

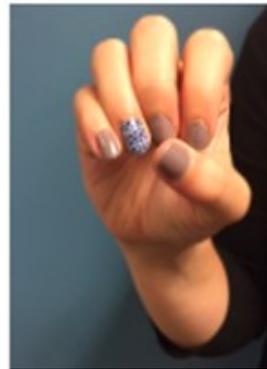


Image 1



Image 2

Can this help my child?

Manual mimicry can be used in addition to other cues to help children produce the target sound. Manual mimicry is not used alone by your therapist. Your therapist will help you determine which cues work best to help your child achieve their speech goals!

If you have questions regarding use of Manual Mimicry, please contact the CTC Speech Department, 724-942-6100.

References:

- Daley, C., and Rusiewicz, H. (2021). Manual mimicry in the teaching and learning of phonemes for singing. *Journal of singing*. Volume 77, No. 4, pp. 521–532. [https://www.nats.org/Library/JOS On Point/JOS 077 04 2021 521.pdf](https://www.nats.org/Library/JOS%20On%20Point/JOS_077_04_2021_521.pdf)
- Rivera, J., and Rusiewicz, H. (2017). The Effect of Hand Gesture Cues Within the Treatment of /r/ for a College-Aged Adult with Persisting Childhood Apraxia of Speech. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. https://doi.org/10.1044/2017_AJSLP-15-0172

Join the CTC Team!

Want To Be Part of Our CTC Team?

We have the following positions available:

Please spread the word if you or someone you know may be interested.

Family Resource Coordinator This opportunity is a contract position that is a flexible 8-12 hours per week between our McMurray and Washington locations. It is fully funded through a United Way grant.

- Qualification: Those interested should have experience, knowledge and passion for educating, informing and empowering families in need of support. This individual must be able to direct families to appropriate resources in their surrounding communities based upon each child's/families individual needs in an unbiased objective manner.

Per-diem Physical Therapist

- Qualifications: must have a license to practice PT in the state of PA or eligible for licensure and have 1+ year experience in pediatrics.



WHS is proud to partner with Washington United Way

Part-time Licensed Professional Counselor or Licensed Clinical Social Worker (16 hrs/wk)

- Qualification: must have a license or eligible for licensure in the state of PA and have 1+ year experience counseling children and their families.

Per-diem Occupational Therapist

- Qualifications: must have a license to practice PT in the state of PA or eligible for licensure and have 1+ year experience in pediatrics.

Please apply online at indeed.com for the therapy and counselor positions. Individuals interested in the Family Resource Coordinator position can contact us at 724-942-6123. We look forward to hearing from interested individuals soon!

Sincerely,
CTC Team



Social Media

Follow WHS on Facebook! The CTC Physical Therapy Department was recently featured as was information on Down Syndrome Awareness Month.



New Health Insurance?

We only learn of your child's insurance changes by you informing us.



Please inform the front office of any changes ASAP to avoid financial issues.

<https://whs.org/care-treatment/childrens-care/childrens-therapy-center/>