



Children's Therapy Connection

Washington Health System Children's Therapy Center

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The Power to Change Children's Lives

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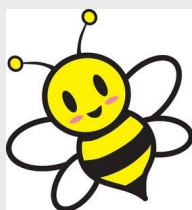
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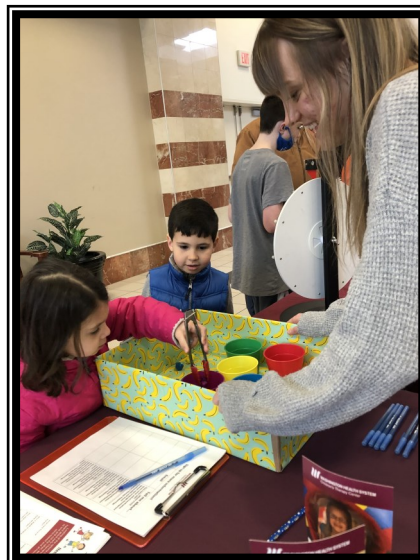
<https://whs.org/care-treatment/childrens-care/childrens-therapy-center/>

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CTC at Kid's Fest



The Children's Therapy Center took part in Kid's Fest this past March. Kid's Fest is an annual event held at Washington Crown Centre to entertain kids of all ages. At the CTC table, kids played games that represented each of our therapy disciplines. Everyone received a prize! Therapists were on hand to answer any parent questions. It was a fun-filled, busy day for all involved!



Occupational Therapy

Did you know.....

April is Occupational Therapy Month!

Submitted by: Lauryn Moon, West Virginia University Occupational Therapy Student

What is Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics?

Occupational Therapy aims to help children, typically up to the age of 18, achieve goals that help them be successful and reach their highest level of independence in their daily life and in their environment. Occupational therapists base their treatment around scientific evidence and research. Occupational therapists work on various areas that affect a child's ability to participate in daily activities. They look at physical, emotional, psychological, and environmental factors. Listed below are all the areas in which an occupational therapist can work with your child and a description of what they cover.

How can Occupational Therapy help your child?

Activities of Daily Living: Bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, and grooming.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living: Money management, time management, meal preparation, driving, communication management, care of others or pets, and employment seeking.

Feeding: Oral motor skills, utensil use, self-feeding techniques, picky/problem eating, mealtime routines, and seating/positioning.

Sensory Processing: Sensory Processing is the way a child processes sensory information within their environment. Sensory processing includes the five senses, taste, touch, smell, hearing, and vision, as well as body positioning and movement.

Fine Motor Skills: Grasping, hand-eye coordination, hand dominance, bilateral coordination, finger isolation, dexterity, and in-hand manipulation.



Gross Motor Skills: Balance, sitting and standing posture, throwing, or catching a ball, lifting, skipping, and jumping.



Visual-Motor Skills: Pre-writing skills, handwriting, coloring, forming shapes, building with blocks, or cutting.

Visual Perceptual Skills: Visual discrimination (find the difference or which one is different), visual memory (seeing and image/form and being able to remember it, i.e. Letter/number ID), spatial relationships (ID Left and Right or other spatial concepts such as up/down), form constancy (ability to ID objects/shapes/forms even if size or position changes), sequential memory (seeing a pattern and being able to remember it, i.e. spelling), visual figure-ground (hidden pictures), and visual closure (puzzles or ability to ID or complete half of a given picture).

Oculomotor Skills: Visual tracking (eyes being able to follow a moving object), visual saccades (ability of the eyes to make accurate jumps as we change targets, i.e. reading), visual fixation (ability to hold eyes steady without moving off target), visual scanning (ability to use vision to search in an organized way, i.e. top to bottom, left to right), convergence (turning of the eyes inward to keep eyes on an object up close), and divergence (turning of the eyes outward when looking at and object at a distance).

Other Important Areas:

- Range of Motion
- Strength
- Play Skills
- Social Participation
- Direction Following
- Emotional Regulation
- Reflex Integration

If you have concerns regarding your child's/ children's abilities in any of these skill areas, please contact the Occupational Therapy Department, 724-942-6100.

CTC Superstars!

Physical Therapy Brayden Gaiter



Brayden is our PT star! When Brayden started physical therapy he was unable to roll, crawl, or get into a sitting position. Now he is crawling independently and recently started walking on his own! Brayden loves to walk around the center, exploring and waving to all of his therapists and the other children. He is working on improving safety with walking, stair negotiation, and improving strength and balance on the right leg. We are so proud of Brayden! He works so hard and has come so far since initiating therapy.

Occupational Therapy Nathan Bowles



Nathan has been working hard in Occupational Therapy over the past few months. He has recently achieved his visual motor goal of copying circles and is able to cut lines and some simple shapes. He always has a playful and positive demeanor with a curiosity to learn. He especially loves to complete the Animal Exercise chart during our sessions and enjoys working on puzzles! Way to go Nathan, Miss Karen is proud of you!

Speech Therapy Liam Radomski

Liam is using multiple words in sentences to communicate with his family and friends. He has been working really hard on using his sounds at the beginning of his words! It's really helping everyone understand him more and more. Liam works incredibly hard here at CTC and at home! Liam's family is great and follows through on all homework suggestions. Liam always comes in with a smile and tell his therapists about things he does with his sister. Liam's favorite word right now is "why" and enjoys playing the Sneaky Snacky Squirrel game!

Miss Sarah and Miss Kelly are very proud of him!



Physical Therapy

Developmental Coordination Disorder: What is it, and can we help?

Submitted by: Jennifer Kraus, PTA

Development Coordination disorder (or DCD) occurs in roughly 6-13% of typically developing children, and is twice as common in males as it is females. A child with DCD is usually one who has been labeled as “clumsy”. They often have difficulty and disinterest in team sports, poor spatial or body awareness, and difficulty learning new tasks. Their handwriting can be messy, and they can have difficulty focusing on tasks in school; standing in line or staying seated at their desk is often a challenge. Research shows on average, there is one child in every grade school class with Developmental Coordination Disorder. While there is a strong prevalence of DCD in children with diagnoses of ADHD or Learning Disabilities, kids with neurological diagnoses do not qualify for a Developmental Coordination Disorder Diagnosis as their challenges are considered to be directly related to that primary diagnosis.



So what's the good news?

Therapy can help! If your child is currently receiving OT or SLT at CTC, someone from the PT department can provide a quick screening and parent questionnaire to assess for Developmental Coordination Disorder, and to see if a physical therapy evaluation would be appropriate for your child. After an evaluation, we can provide you with things to work on at home, as well as initiate regular PT sessions if they are determined to be medically necessary. Physical therapy sessions would focus on improving strength, balance, and higher level coordination skills to directly impact your child's daily function and participation with other kids their age. We can help you explore recreational activities your child may enjoy, as treatment of DCD only works when children have the opportunity to practice skills across various types of environments. Therapy is not necessarily a “cure” for DCD, but we can help improve your child's foundational skills so they find ways to enjoy being active and develop lifelong healthy habits.

Please contact one of our Physical Therapists at 724-942-6100 with any questions.

*This article is presented in summary of the Med-Bridge continuing education courses entitled **What is Developmental Coordination Disorder?**, **Assessment of the Child with Suspected or Diagnosed DCD**, and **Intervention for the Child with DCD**. All three courses were developed and presented by Robert Barnhart, PT, MS, ScDPT.*

Speech Therapy

Autism Spectrum Disorder and Emotions

Submitted by:

Madison Comstock, SLP graduate clinician



According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by social communication and interaction deficits, as well as, repetitive behaviors. A common sign and symptom of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is difficulty determining emotional states of one self and those of others.

Traditionally, therapy uses flashcards, social scenarios and still images in order to ask the child to identify how a person is feeling. However, that is not a functional way to determine what someone is feeling in everyday situations. I decided to conduct research using videos, which could allow children to use context clues (hints found in the picture/ video to understand meaning) to determine emotional states in order to be able to transfer this skill to real life situations.

For my research, I studied many articles and conducted my own research to see how well children with ASD recognized emotions using still pictures versus watching a video without words. I chose to use the six basic emotions which are happy, sad, angry, surprised, disgusted, and afraid.



My externship at the CTC allowed me the opportunity to include children at CTC whose parents consented to the participation.

Overall, the children were able to identify emotions using pictures better than watching a video. This was not surprising. Watching a video, generally takes much more inferring and context then looking at a picture. The majority of children were able to label happy and sad. The other emotions proved more difficult. Results may suggest teaching emotions with both pictures and video can allow the child to generalize what is taught in sessions to real life situations.

It is important for a child to develop appropriate social skills in order to build friendships and relationships with others throughout their lifetime!



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To schedule an appointment for a speech/ language evaluation for your child, please call 724-942-6100.

For more information on resources and to learn more about Autism visit the ASHA website: <https://www.asha.org/>



Welcome to CTC!



Speech Therapy Carly Sommer

Carly is an ASHA certified and state-licensed speech-language pathologist who graduated from Duquesne University with a Bachelor's degree in Health Sciences and a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology.

Carly has been working as a school based SLP for six years and is excited to begin working with the children and families of the Children's Therapy Center as a per diem SLP. In her spare time, Carly enjoys running, boating, skiing, and trying new workout classes while balancing it all out with going to new restaurants, attending concerts, and exploring new spots in and around the city of Pittsburgh. The speech Department is excited to have her on staff!

LIVE UNITED



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Washington United Way

Staff Milestones!

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

25 years

Lisa Haines, M.A., CCC/SLP



20 years

Marianne S. Smith, MSW, LCSW



5 years

Karen Cieska, COTA



Social Media

Follow WHS on Facebook!



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/>