



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

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Back to School!

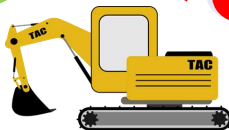
With the return of school quickly approaching. It is important to complete a schedule change request form if your child's current schedule will conflict with their upcoming school and bus schedule.

- Schedule change request forms are available at the front office.
- This will help ensure continuous therapy services for your child during the transition back to school.

Please be aware that we have many schedule change requests that are submitted around this time of year. Due to the high volume, requests are honored on a first come first serve basis. Lack of available requested day/time will result in your child going on our waiting list for your desired day/time. The call in program is always available in the interim-availability is based upon cancellations we receive throughout the day/week.

Touch-A-Truck!

Sensory Friendly



Touch A Truck



No lights, sirens, or moving parts on these vehicles! Small crowds will allow all of the children to enjoy this special event!

Where:

WHS Children's Therapy Center
1000 Waterdam Plaza Dr. McMurray, PA 15317

When:

Saturday September 9th
10 am-1 pm

Please call or sign up in the front office to reserve your time before
September 15th
724-942-6100



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM

Physical Therapy

All About Bikes!

Submitted by Jamie Streiff, DPT

Parents are always asking what type of bike should I get for my child? There are many different options available for children of all abilities. The below bikes are options that you may see being used in Physical Therapy at the Children's Therapy Center.



The Radio flyer tricycle can be adjusted to fit your child from 1-5 years old. You can assist with steering and wear an over the shoulder seatbelt for added safety.



In Physical Therapy, we have adaptive pedals on our tricycle to assist children in keeping their feet on the pedals while working on balance, coordination, and motor planning to ride the tricycle. There are a variety of adaptive pedals and adaptive straps that can be found online to add on to a tricycle you already own if your child is having trouble keeping their feet on the pedals.



Another option is a balance bike. These bikes do not have pedals, but your child moves by walking or running and balancing on the two wheels. These bikes focus on balance first, and once your child is able to ride the bike without needing to put their feet down to assist, they may be ready to add pedals. Often kids can skip the training wheels and go straight to riding the bicycle once they have mastered balancing on two wheels.



The Rifton Adaptive tricycle is a great option for children who made need additional support for sitting balance, steering, and pedaling. This tricycle is available if your child qualifies through Variety, the Children's Charity of Pittsburgh. Your child can trial this tricycle in both the McMurray and Washington offices, and a physical therapist can assist you in applying for a bike with specific adaptations so that your child can be as independent as possible. Please reach out to anyone in the physical therapy department if you have additional questions regarding bikes!

CTC Superstars!



Speech Therapy Jacob Bennett



Jake brightens everyone's day when he arrives at The Children's Therapy Center. Miss Joy and Miss Sarah are so proud of all of the new words he has begun saying and the new sounds he is working on. Jake's big smiles let us know that he is also very proud of himself. Two of his new favorite words are his siblings' names (Ava and Jeb). Way to go Jake!



Occupational Therapy Dominick Depuglia



Dominick has been up to a lot of exciting things in OT. He has made great progress recently with all of his dressing goals. Along with continuing to work so very hard on his scissor use and handwriting goals to prepare for school. Dominick is such a thoughtful child and has the most creative imagination with any activity. We are always smiling when he's around! Keep up the great work, Dominick- Miss Marissa is so very proud of you.



Physical Therapy Roman Talarico



Roman has been working so hard on gaining independent mobility through crawling. He is transitioning in and out of sitting well on his own, and is getting the hang of all the motions to crawl forward. He's been taking really nice steps in his gait trainer in the gym, and rocks his Friday sessions in the pool with Miss Jenn. He loves to grab rings (and sometimes Miss Jenn's glasses) off her head when they're working on transitions to standing in the pool. Roman has a smile that'll melt anybody's heart, and a work ethic to match. We couldn't be prouder of you buddy!



New CTC Staff

Speech Therapy Julie Legters, MA, CCC/SLP Speech Therapy Coordinator



Julie Legters is an ASHA certified speech/language pathologist who received her Master's degree from Ohio University and her Bachelor's degree from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Julie is excited to be here as the Speech Therapy Coordinator. She has worked in outpatient rehabilitation, early intervention, schools, and private practice. In her spare time, Julie loves spending time with family and friends, reading, and learning new things. Please join us in welcoming Julie to our CTC team!!

Occupational Therapy Jami Dantry, OTR



Jami Dantry has practiced as a pediatric occupational therapist since 2001. She has primarily worked with school-age children, of all abilities. She currently works as a school-based OT for Canon McMillan. Over her career, she has also worked in the early intervention and outpatient settings. Jami graduated from Duquesne University with a bachelors in Psychology and pursued a Masters degree in Occupational Therapy at Chatham University in 2001. During her career, she furthered her education in the field of sound therapy and sensory processing disorders. Jami also has two sons, Lucas and Gavin. She is excited to start working with the children and families at Children's Therapy Center.

Vacation or Cancellation Notification

CTC Families and Caregivers:

Just a friendly reminder, if you will be on vacation or your child will be unable to attend therapy, please contact our office at least 24 hours in advance to notify us. This allows other children the opportunity to receive therapy within your child's cancellation spot.

Thank you, CTC Staff

Attendance



Miss Sara's OT Activity Corner

Summer Fun in the sun

Summer is the time to be outside and enjoy the weather but we also want to stay cool in the hot sun! Here are a few activities you can do with your kids to beat the heat but also promote their OT skills!

Activity 1: Painting Ice Cubes

This activity is a fun way to stay cool and also use fine motor skills for holding a paintbrush, visual perceptual skills for color recognition and visual motor skills for painting.



Activity 2: Pouring Station

This activity promotes arm/hand strength and control for lifting and pouring from various containers. Add color to the water and work on color recognition as well.



Activity 3:

Ice Smash

This activity is super fun for kids with little prep or tools needed. This activity works on eye-hand coordination and grip strength and will keep them cool in the hot sun!



Activity 4:

Ice Sensory Bin

This activity provides good sensory input using ice and water. Add some spoons or colander and let the fun begin. This activity can work on your child's scooping skills, fine motor skills for grasping the spoon, as well as provide good sensory input. You can also put small toys or other items in the ice for more fun!



Children should be supervised when completing these activities for safety purposes

Occupational Therapy

The Benefits of Outdoor Play

Written and Researched by Gabrielle Farkas, OT student



The season of warm weather and outdoor fun is upon us! Summertime provides children with the best opportunities to enjoy the long, fun days and soak that Vitamin D into their pores; but these aren't the only benefits of outdoor play. Occupational therapy professionals encourage a lot of open-ended play, outdoor games, and outdoor play. There is a natural sensory aspect to outdoor play, which supports self-regulation, emotional regulation, attention, and learning, all through just playing outside!

Playing outside engages all five senses and provides proprioception input allowing kids to coordinate their movements effectively to manage their day's activities or vestibular input which coordinates input about gravity, movement, and balance. Playgrounds integrate various sensory activities such as sandboxes, brightly colored equipment, swings, see-saws, merry-go-rounds, and climbing toys. A sensory-friendly playground will make the most of its natural setting, allowing children the opportunity to see, hear and smell the world around them. It might mean planting a small sensory garden or including fragrant plants in the nearby landscaping. It might incorporate a small wheelchair-accessible trail near the playground for family exploration. It might also include items that make sounds like conga drums or a xylophone.

While outdoor play and exploration provides sensory input, it also has chances for decision making that stimulates problem solving and creative thinking, opportunities that aren't as easily found in the more static indoor environment.

There is a wide variety of fun outdoor activities available in the Pittsburgh area that would provide

the perfect opportunities to reap all of these outdoor benefits! Here are a few of the many outdoor play spaces followed by their highlights:

Backyard at the Children's Museum:

- Musical Swing Set- swinging that produces a pleasant, musical sound.
- Animated Earth- provides play with messy textures and an easy cleanup.
- Allegheny Waterworks- including spigots that pump water allowing for creative play.

The Discovery Garden at Phipps Conservatory:

- Includes a Bird, Butterfly, and Bee Garden.
- Water garden with a mushroom fountain
- Sensory garden that stimulates all five senses

Animal Connections Playground in the Kid's Kingdom at the Pittsburgh Zoo:

- A playful and fun environment educating children on animals behaviors
- Designated play space with a kid-friendly restaurant
- Wilderness Walkways (with deer, beavers, river otters, and owls)

DiscoverGrounds at Beechwood Farm Nature Reserves:

- A treehouse providing inviting ways to encourage exploration
- Water feature where children can use a farm-style pump to bring water into troughs that drain into a small wash
- Tunnel sandbox where children can play with sand inside of a tunnel built into a hillside and protected from the sun

Tiny Town at Soergel Orchards:

- Playground resembling an old western town
- Animals to visit and berry picking
- A pretend pirate ship to explore
- A Butterfly House coming soon

It's a fact that kids are spending less time playing outdoors. From after-school schedules to two working parents, to unsafe conditions, to increased digital screen time, to less outdoor recess time. Children nowadays receive less natural play in the outdoors so guiding them towards these creative, safe and fun ways to explore all the possible benefits outdoor play has to offer could help discover new skills, interests, and friends!

Speech Therapy

Speech Therapy and Art

Submitted by Lisa Haines, MA, CCC/SLP

Speech therapy sessions don't have to look like what one thinks of as a traditional session- drilling sounds and words while playing a game to reinforce what the child is learning. Speech therapy can take on a creative approach to target your child's goals using art. Art is defined as a form of expression using one or more mediums. With the goal of speech therapy being to help children communicate better and to break down the barriers that result from speech deficits, art can be your child's way of expressing themselves as well as a reinforcement while working on their goals.

Art is an important part of your child's life. Art is used as a tool to enhance speech and language development- whether verbal expression or auditory comprehension. Art-based activities engage all senses, be it a craft project, painting, drawing, or making up songs and dances. Art helps to develop creativity, interpersonal skills and improve verbal and comprehension skills all at the same time.



Speech and language goals can be supported by art. For example:

Receptive Language-targeting following directions and learning experimental lessons

- Following single and/or multistep directions: cut, color, paint and then glue etc.
- Decision making/choices: what color should I use, should I use pencils or crayons
- Consequences: if I color on something other than my paper I won't get to use the markers
- Cause and effect: look what happens when I mix yellow and green, what about red and blue, all my colors together make brown!
- Problem-solving: the glue isn't sticking- think of other ways to hold something in place

Expressive Language

- Increasing vocabulary
- Increasing use of descriptors
- Increasing use of present tense and past tense- what are you making/doing?, what did you make/do?
- Expression with tone of voice
- Expression through use of visual mediums
- Describe sequence of steps to make their project.

Talk with your child about their art work. Talking about art is a great way for children to develop their language skills, as they talk about color, shape, and size while describing their work to friends, caregivers, and family. Art activities are not limited to the school or outpatient setting. Art can be done at home too! Try these simple projects and focus on your child's goals.

- Make a collage out of stickers
- Finger paint for an additional OT component
- Paint rocks and place them in your yard or t-shirts to wear to school for opportunities to talk about them with friends
- Make holiday cards to send to family for the opportunity to be creative and complete a functional task.
- Explore the kitchen and find food that can be used to create something unique- pictures, sculptures, towers etc.
- Take a walk outside and find small objects-leaves, sticks, rocks, flowers or nuts that can be glued paper or cardboard.

“Art offers opportunities for self-expression Children express how they feel and think about the world through their art, which gives them a way to express the feelings and ideas that they don't have the words to talk about. This way of expressing themselves helps children to cope with the natural stresses of growing up. Art helps children to develop a sense of their own individuality, a sense of self-respect, and an appreciation for others' work.”

extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare



CTC Information

Social Media

Follow Washington Health System
on Facebook!



Freedom Transit

Families of CTC may be eligible for reimbursement of travel to the Children's Therapy Center. If your child receives Medical Assistance call 1-800-331-5058 to inquire whether you qualify for this service.

To view the reimbursement form:
https://www.freedom-transit.org/forms/MATP-Reimbursement-Form-5_26_16.pdf



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.

**WHS is proud to partner with
Washington United Way**



Memorial Benches

The CTC staff would like to thank Jodi Shemansky of the speech department for initiating and completing a memorial for our beloved staff member, Sarah Haines who we sadly lost last Fall. Jodi received donations from staff to purchase two memorial benches and flowers for each of our locations. We are so happy to have this beautiful tribute.

