



Children's Therapy Connection

Washington Health System Children's Therapy Center

Winter 2024 * Volume 28 Issue 1

The Power to Change Children's Lives

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[https://whs.org/care-treatment/
childrens-care/childrens-
therapy-center/](https://whs.org/care-treatment/childrens-care/childrens-therapy-center/)

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Ms. Cathy

Community Support



Range Resources has supported the Washington Health System Foundation (WHSF) for 15 years, and in more recent years began providing grants to the WHS Children's Therapy Center (CTC), which offers invaluable treatments and services to local children with special needs. In 2022, Range Resources provided a grant that made the CTC's new sensory rooms possible. Additional donations enabled the purchases of special physical therapy equipment, sensory learning equipment, a vibration plate, and a wall ladder. Employees from Range Resources were able to tour the McMurray location and see the items they donated which have benefited both the Washington and McMurray locations. The staff at WHS CTC explained how beneficial these items have been that are used daily and expressed their gratitude for Range Resources' support.

In addition to their annual support, new last year, Range Resources introduced "The Community Spotlight Project." This project helps raise awareness for local nonprofits highlighting eight local organizations. WHSF was one of those featured nonprofits. As part of this project, the non-profit organization that received the most votes received a \$10,000 grant from Range Resources! With over 400 votes, WHS Children's Therapy Center won the Range Resources Community Spotlight Project! Thank you to all who voted. And a huge thank you to Range Resources for including us in this contest and generously awarding us with a \$10,000 grant. This grant will be used to purchase new pediatric treadmills and other equipment to help us to better serve our children.



Physical Therapy

Go Baby Go

Submitted by: Kelsey, SPT

What is Go Baby Go?

Go Baby Go is a national program that offers modified ride-on cars to children with mobility impairments. Go Baby Go was founded by Cole Galoway PT, PhD in 2012 at the University of Delaware where he wanted to focus on a way of assisting children to increase their independence. Since then, Go Baby Go has been prevalent in colleges and universities across the country with participation from physical therapy and occupational therapy programs.

How are the ride-on cars beneficial?

Few devices allow younger children to be fully or mostly independent giving these devices a unique opportunity for families. The ride-on cars Go Baby Go programs modify and adapt for children have many benefits. They not only allow children to increase their independence with mobility, but they also support their growth in cognition, motor, and social skills. Additionally, through power mobility children learn problem solving through cause and effect as well as increase their attention to task.



How are the cars built?

The ride-on cars are built using a general base which is assembled by physical therapy students, occupational therapy students, and occasionally engineering students at some campuses.

The base is then modified with several changes such as switches for the accelerator in place of the typical floor gas pedal. Other common modifications are cushions placed along the steering wheel or supports being added to the seat based on individual needs. Additionally, foam noodle supports are placed along hard plastic pieces of the car where a child with poor trunk or limb control may need increased cushion. These modifications are made ahead of time based on meetings with the family. However, supplies are on hand the day of the car reveal event in order to make last minute modifications based on a child's needs.

In addition to support for safety and comfort, the cars are individualized for the children based on their interests. The building team will decorate the cars with the child's name, cartoon characters, music notes, sports, and more to have the car feel special and make it feel their own.

How do families get a car?

Cars are available for free to families made available through donations! Chatham University holds 2 car reveal events per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The spring event is scheduled for May 5, 2024! Reach out to your physical or occupational therapist if you would like more information about how to get involved.



Occupational Therapy

Executive Functioning in Childhood

Written and Researched by Emily, OTS



Executive functioning refers to a combination of cognitive skills that we use in our daily lives to complete basic and complex tasks. Executive functioning skills are developed through practice and integration to everyday life and it's important to incorporate these skills into a child's daily routine to promote the development of these skills and build upon them as they age.

Executive functioning includes a large number of cognitive skills that work together as a whole to support general function. The skills included are sustained attention, task initiation, metacognition, planning, emotional control, persistence, flexibility, organization, response inhibition, stress tolerance, time management, and working memory.

Executive functioning can be broken down into six categories to better understand what makes up this large cognitive skill. The six categories are:

1. Organizing, prioritizing, and activating for tasks
2. Focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention to task
3. Regulating alertness, sustaining effort and processing speed
4. Managing frustration and modulating emotions
5. Utilizing working memory and accessing recall
6. Monitoring and self-regulating action

In order to best support your child's executive functioning skills, it's important to work on activities at home and adjust them to age-appropriate expectations for executive functioning skills. Below is an outline of some activities that are appropriate to address within various age groups:

Age 3 to 5 years old

- Imaginary play with props and toys where the child makes the rules
- Storytelling
- Movement songs/games that repeat and are easy to follow along with
- Quiet games such as matching/sorting activities
- Puzzles

Age 5 to 7 years old

- Card games with rules associated
- Board games with structure and rules
- Physical activity and games
- Movement/song games that are more complex
- Games with strategy and reflection required such as guessing games and I-Spy

Age 7 to 12 years old

- Card games and board games with complex strategies
- Organized sports with identified roles for each player
- Games with constant motion
- Learning a musical instrument, singing in rounds, and learning dances to music
- Brain teasers and puzzles that are more complex and build upon each other such as cross words and sudoku

Please contact the Occupational Therapy department if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child/children's development, 724-942-6100.

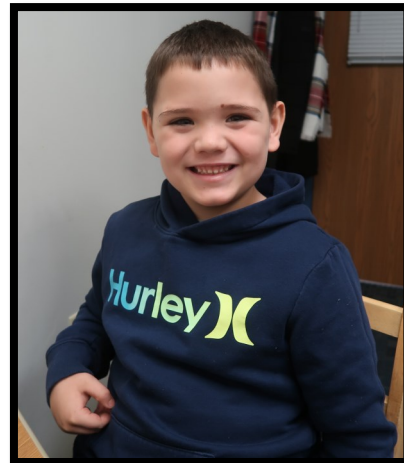
CTC Superstars!

Physical Therapy Louise Tonecha



Lulu is our PT star! She works hard in therapy improving her leg strength, balance, and coordination. She is now walking up and down the stairs with less assist and using both feet to navigate obstacles. During therapy, Lulu loves playing with musical toys, going down the slide, and sitting on the swing. She always has a big smile on her face and does her best. Great job Lulu! We are all so proud of you!

Occupational Therapy Levi Dunn



Levi has been working very hard in occupational therapy and with his friends in the preschool social group. I am proud of Levi for his determination when practicing dressing skills, scissor use, and handwriting skills. Levi loves to play any game (and always beats Miss Marissa), along with scooting or playing ball games in the gym. He always has a smile on his face and shows a kindness that makes everyone around him smile as well. Keep up the hard work Levi!

Speech Therapy Joa Romano

Joa has been making amazing progress with his goals of making more sounds! He started to imitate actions in songs and this led to an increase in vowel productions throughout each session. We applied new vocabulary and sounds to his favorite song, "The Wheels on the Bus" and he started to say even more vowels and consonants. At Christmas time, we worked on saying, "Ho Ho Ho!" and Joa started to imitate this with a unique dance to accompany it. He has been so excited when he is able to produce a word and will smile from ear to ear when he is understood by his speech/language pathologist! Joa enjoys playing with vehicles and is able to use an AAC device to choose which one he wants. Thanks, Joa...for being such a hard worker!



I am very proud of him because he never gives up trying to make sounds, he is so happy when he is successful, and he is a joy to play with! Miss Julie

Speech Therapy

Prepped for Preschool: How to Support Your Preschooler's Language Development for School Success

Submitted by: Miss Ann Therese, M.S., CCC-SLP

Language development is a vital part of a child's development, and the preschool years (ages 3-5) are a time rich in growth of a child's language production and comprehension. Here are just some of the activities that you can do together for language development and preschool readiness!

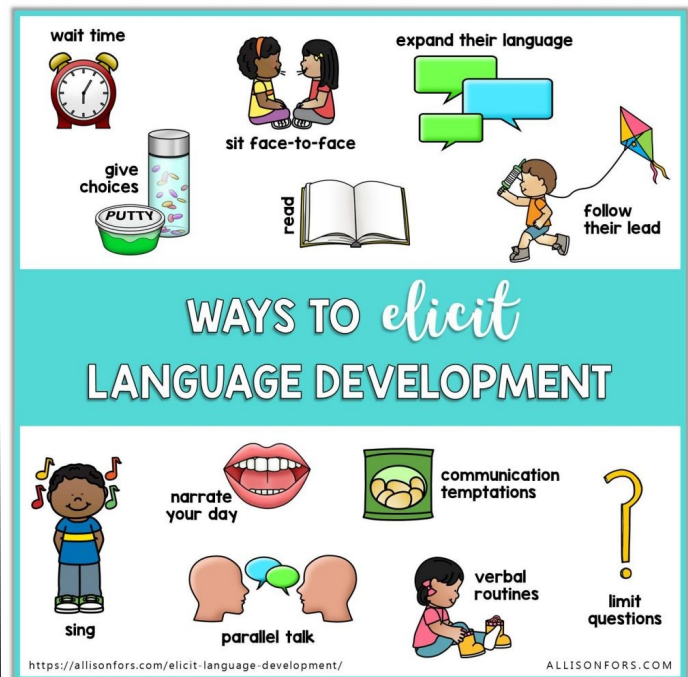
Storytelling and shared book reading: reading together is one of the best ways to support your child's language development, because it gives them an opportunity to learn new words, sounds, and early literacy skills, like how to hold a book and find words, all skills they will use daily in preschool. Talk about what you're reading, including the pictures, and try to get creative with fun voices and sounds. It sparks their imagination and provides bonding experiences for you and your child—also important to language development!

Building play (e.g., blocks, construction vehicles, etc.): this type of play encourages children to learn academic concepts such as shapes, size, counting, and colors, but it also provides them opportunities to develop fine motor skills and spatial awareness. You can help support their language development by modeling early sound affects and action words, such as "oh no!" and "fall down," as well as imaginative play by creating different buildings or scenarios to play out.

Get musical: whether its singing a song, playing a musical game such as musical chairs, or creating and playing your own instruments with pots, pans, cups, beans, and other everyday items, music is a wonderful way to develop language, including improving memory, focusing attention, and building new vocabulary. Make up songs about their favorite toys, people, or places and perform them!

Sensory play: sensory bins and boxes aren't just for OT! Activating all five senses encourages language development and builds strong memories, a huge part of developing language. It can be as simple as frozen peas taped to a table, or a more elaborate sensory bin incorporating rice, pom-poms, beans, buttons, pasta, and more! Hide favorite little toys or other objects, or even word and letter cards, inside for your child to find, and then talk about what the items feel like and look like. Make edible sensory bins with things like rainbow-colored jello or scented sensory bins with things like cocoa powder, and talk about the sensations they experience while playing.

Create communication opportunities in everyday activities: you don't have to buy special toys or have special experiences to encourage your preschooler's language development. Take time every day to talk and play with your child. Talk about the lunch you're eating, the drive to school you're taking, the things you see at the grocery store and the park. The more opportunities you provide for your child to interact with their world, the richer their language environment will become!



Miss Sara's OT Activity Corner

Keep the Kids Entertained all Winter!

With the cold weather upon us and the move to more indoor activities, here are a few activities you can do with your kids inside but also promote their OT skills!

Activity 1: Tape resist winter painting– Grab some paper, painters tape, paint brushes and some paint. Make a design with the tape and then paint over top. Once paint is dry, pull off tape and you have your design! This activity addresses pencil grasp, coloring skills, and you can even add color recognition or make letters/numbers with the tape and address letter/number recognition as well..



Activity 2: Feed the snowman/snow ball grab– With this fun activity you will need kitchen tongs, an empty clear bottle/container and cotton balls. You can dress it up as a snowman or leave it plain. Have your child grab the cotton balls and place into container using the tongs. This fun activity works on fine motor skills, hand strength and eye hand coordination and can be adaptable to all skill levels.



Activity 3: Ball ramp– this activity is super fun for kids with little prep or tools needed. This activity incorporates gross motor skills as well as eye-hand coordination and problem solving skills. Gather up some balls, get some cardboard and a basket/bin. Make the ramp and align the basket and let the fun begin!



Activity 4: Salt bin writing – For this activity You will need table salt (enough to cover the bottom of the bin) and a shallow container, along with some shapes or letters drawn on separate paper. This activity is good for tactile sensory input as well as prewriting and handwriting skills. You can also add small toys and spoons and engage in tactile play in the bin as well



****Children should be supervised when completing these activities for safety purposes.****

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**



Free Diapers, Pull-Ups & Wipes!



Where: The Diaper Pantry
Peters Creek Baptist Church
6300 Library Rd
South Park, PA 15129

When: Every 3rd Saturday of the month
Time: 9:00 AM– 12:00 PM

Other Donations Provided:

New and gently used baby/children's clothing, baby equipment, toys, etc.

Contact Information:

DIAPERPANTRY@PCBC.CHURCH and found on Facebook.