



# Children's Therapy Connection

Washington Health System Children's Therapy Center

Summer 2024 \* Volume 28 Issue 3

## The Power to Change Children's Lives

- UPMC Washington..1
- Coca Cola Bear Winners..... 1
- CTC Stars .....2
- CTC New Staff.....3
- CTC Milestones.....3
- Occupational Therapy.....4-5
- Speech Therapy .....6
- Miss Sara's OT Activity Corner .....7
- Physical Therapy... 8
- CTC information ...9
- Touch-A-Truck .....9
- Osaic Foundation award..... 10



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

Design, layout and editing by:  
Ms. Cathy

## UPMC Washington

**'The Future Is Bright, There Is Much Good to Come'**



On June 12, employees, medical staff, and community leaders joined to celebrate Washington Health System becoming UPMC Washington and UPMC Greene. UPMC is a world- renowned health care provider and global leader in groundbreaking research, treatments, and clinical care. You can read more about what this exciting affiliation means for our community at <https://whs.org/whs-and-upmc-affiliation/>

## Coca Cola Polar Bear Winners!

Thank you to ABARTA Coca-Cola for their donation of 2 large polar bears that were raffled at both Washington and McMurray Children's Therapy Center Locations.



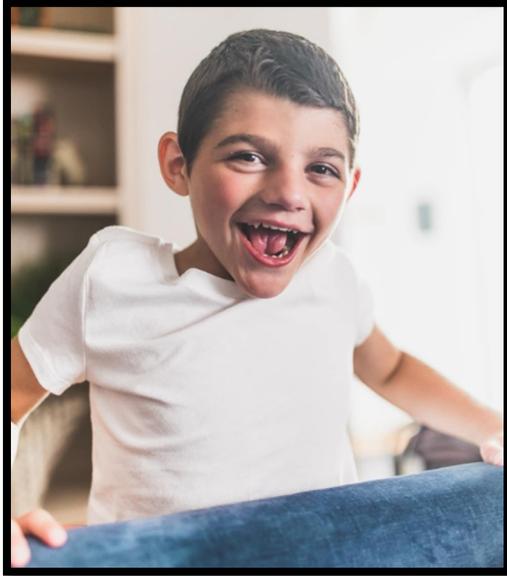
McMurray: Clayton H.



Washington: Ajax R.

# CTC Superstars!

★ Physical Therapy  
Morgan "Levi" WItthrow ★



Levi is our PT star! Levi has been working so hard in PT and is always smiling and laughing! He is now standing for longer periods of time, walking longer distances, ascending and descending the stairs without assistance, and starting to squat with good balance. Levi has made great progress and we are so proud of him!

★ Occupational Therapy  
Ivy Crouse ★



Ivy has been working hard in OT for the past couple of months, working on her fine motor skills and attention to task! She has made great progress and comes to OT excited and ready to learn. Miss Julia is SO proud of you, Ivy! Keep up the great work!"

★ Speech Therapy  
Brady Hogan ★



Brady is doing an amazing job with all of his speech sounds. In particular, he is quickly catching on to that tricky /r/ sound in all word positions! Brady comes to every session ready to work. He practices his sounds at home, which shows when he comes to speech! Brady has a great attitude and a contagious smile! He loves sports and hanging out with his brothers. Brady likes to play games at speech while practicing his sounds and is competitive! And more times that not, comes out victorious over Miss Liza!

Congratulations Brady!

# New CTC Staff

## Physical Therapy Department Kelsey



Hello, my name is Kelsey. I am a licensed physical therapist who received my doctorate degree from Chatham University. I also went to Chatham for my undergraduate degree where I received my bachelor's degree in Exercise Science. I am Pittsburgh born and raised which means I loved rooting for all the Pittsburgh sports teams! In addition to being a big sports fan I also love Star Wars! I love to spend time with my dog, go on hikes, or build LEGOs. I am excited to join the CTC team as a PRN physical therapist! If Kelsey looks familiar to some of you, it is because Kelsey completed a clinical experience training as a student therapist at CTC for three months in the Fall of 2023.

## Speech Therapy Department Katie



Hello, my name is Katie, I am a passionate and experienced Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) with a strong clinical background since 2016. I specialize in evaluating and treating a variety of childhood communication disorders, with a particular focus on:

- Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Articulation and Phonological Disorders

Since 2017, I have dedicated my work to the early intervention setting (children age 0-3), collaborating with families and caregivers to support the communication development of young children. Prior to this, I gained valuable experience working with school students and pediatric outpatients, allowing me to understand communication needs across different age groups and environments. I am committed to providing individualized, evidence-based therapy that empowers children to reach their full communication potential. I believe in fostering strong partnerships with families and other professionals to ensure a comprehensive and supportive approach.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my mini Berne doodle "Turbo" and hitting the slopes for some snowboarding adventures.

Welcome Katie!

## CTC Milestones!

**Congratulations to the following CTC Speech/Language Pathologists for their dedicated years of service!**

<b>Miss Jodi</b>	<b>Miss Liza</b>	<b>Miss Kelly</b>
<b>20 years</b>	<b>10 years</b>	<b>5 Years</b>

**Thank you for all you do to provide great patient care at CTC!**

# Occupational Therapy

## Sensory Diet for Summer

Submitted by: Miss Meghan , MOT, OTR/L

**Sensory processing activity ideas to facilitate improving regulation and attention.**



### Auditory

- Neighborhood Listening Scavenger Hunt- Notice the sounds in the neighborhood. Ask your child to locate or name the origin of the sounds as they walk around the neighborhood. If the sound is too far away, ask them to name the origin. During this activity, they need to discriminate between sounds.
- Auditory Hide and Seek- Play a game of hide and seek with sounds. The child that is searching for kids can make a call and each hider responds with their own sound. The person who is looking for others can determine who is making the sounds they hear and locate each child one at a time.

### Movement/ Body positioning

- Hose Tug- Use a regular garden hose to incorporate heavy work by pulling the hose across the lawn. Use the hose to water flowers, bushes, or even to spray at targets drawn with sidewalk chalk.
- Shovel Carry and Dig- Use a garden shovel in an adult or kids' size to shovel dirt, rocks, leaves, sticks, or mulch from one area to another. Try filling a bucket with the different mediums and then carry them to another area of the yard. Good old fashioned lawn work can do wonders for a proprioceptive input seeking kiddo!

- Jump Rope Pull and Slide- This activity adds a bit of vestibular input to the heavy work of pulling a jump rope. Use a piece of cardboard cut from a large box or cereal box to create a flat piece. Have your child sit on the cardboard and hold onto a jump rope. Pull them around or down slopes as they hold onto the rope. You can also try this activity with the child pulling another individual on the cardboard.
- Hopscotch, Jump Rope, Climb trees

### Oral

- Dandelion Race- Pick several dandelions and place them into two piles. Kids can race another child to blow all the seeds from the dandelions one at a time. Blowing dandelions is a proprioceptive activity that provides calming sensory input through the mouth.
- Smelly Bubbles- Most kids agree that there is nothing more fun or summery than bubbles. Try adding a scented component by using scented bubbles. Blowing bubbles is an oral sensory calming activity for kids.
- Kazoo Parade- Gather kids from the neighborhood and pass out a bunch of kazooos. Blowing a kazoo is a sensory activity that provides proprioceptive input through the mouth. This is a calming activity and can be used for self-regulating or improved focus.
- Hot and Cold Taste Test- Alternate between hot and cold taste sensations in a taste testing game. Prepare cold foods like ice cubes, chunks of popsicles, and frozen vegetables alongside a hot foods tray like warm applesauce, warm sun tea, and toasted bread.

(Continued on page 4)

# Occupational Therapy

(From page 3)

## Sensory Diet for Summer

### Touch

- Create a mud kitchen in an area of your backyard. It doesn't need to be complicated. A simple piece of wood or a sheet of cardboard makes a nice workspace. Use buckets, scoops, and spoons to mix up muddy concoctions while working on fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination to scoop and pour in a tactile sensory (and very messy) imagination play.
- Flower Sensory Bin- Explore tactile differences with an outdoor dandelion messy sensory bin. Add more squishy messy play by adding dirt or sand to the bin. Use scoops and tongs to add in fine motor work.
- Feel and Name Game- Fill a bin or paper bag with grass clippings. To the bag, add random small toys, plastic figures, or magnetic letters. Ask the child to reach into the bag without looking. They can locate a small item and feel it as they try to name the object.
- Sandbox Dig and Find- Practice tactile discrimination in the sandbox. You'll need two sets of matching items for this activity. (Magnetic letters, coins, small figures, or matching utensils would work.) When the child is not looking, hide small objects and figures in a sandbox. Then, show the child an object that matches one of the hidden items. Do not name the object. Rather, ask them to "find another one just like this."
- When in doubt add water! Try these backyard sensory tactile play ideas: goop play dough shaving cream backyard messy play date paper Mache.

### Visual

Grass hide and scanning- Use grass clippings to fill a large plastic bin. Tuck small items, coins, or small parts into the bin. Ask kids to scan the

- area and locate items with just their eyes. Kids can try to remember the order that they found the items in a visual memory game.
- Backyard Toy Memory Game- Continue to work on visual memory and scanning visual perceptual skills by spreading out small toys into a plot of backyard. Ask your child to look at the toys and try to remember all the items. Cover the toys with a blanket and then remove one or two items. Remove the blanket and ask your child to recall the missing item.
- Cloud Scan- Lay on the ground with your child as you look up at the clouds on a clear but cloudy day. Watch clouds as they move across the sky. Ask your child to see images in the cloud's shapes. Ask them to rotate on the ground so that their head is now where their feet just were. Ask them if they still see the same shape or if it is a new shape. Discovering an outline of a shape in a form uses a visual perceptual skill known as form perception and works along with visual closure and form constancy to allow us to determine that shapes, letters, and numbers are the same no matter what their direction.
- Figure Ground Hunt- Use rocks and letters to practice visual perception with a sensory bin like we did in this activity.
- Catch a ball. Try catching while standing, sitting, swinging, rolling a ball, catching between legs, etc.
- Hit a tennis racket at a target. Ideas include bubbles, falling leaves, large balls, small rubber balls, and balloons.
- Scavenger hunts-try doing these while crawling.
- Catching butterflies in a net. Try catching fireflies, too.
- Bubble pop- Try popping bubbles with a toe, knee, foot, head, finger, or elbow.

Please contact the CTC Occupational Therapy Department if you have any questions, 724-942-6100.



# Speech Therapy

## Board Games and Apps for Family Vacation: How they can be used for speech and language skills

Submitted by: Miss Reilly, SLP Graduate Clinician

Incorporating board games into family vacations not only makes learning fun but also provides a relaxed environment for practicing speech and language skills. Here are just some games that you can do as a family in the car or at home during your summer vacation!

### Head Bandz:

This game focuses on a variety of language skills! It includes describing, asking/answering questions, and building vocabulary. You can play amongst many different categories – such as food, animals, or everyday things. There is also an app version of this charades game called “Heads up!” that can be used in the car! This app uses the same skills for building language throughout different categories. Some include celebrities, movies, animals, accents, characters, and more!

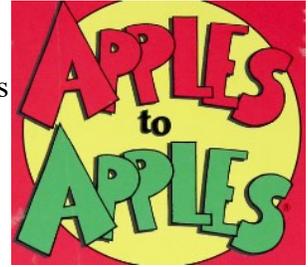


### Categorize it!

An app that targets categories and concepts with various levels of difficulty. Some concepts include same/different, cold/hot, colors, and items that start with the same letter.

### Apples to Apples:

Apples to Apples works on vocabulary skills as well as word relationships, describing, comparing/contrasting. It is fun for the whole family!



### Mad libs:

Mad libs can be played on an individual pad and pencil or a free app on a device. This game is a great way to work on grammar and parts of speech. Listening to everyone's story and laughing can be fun for the whole family!

### Scattergories:

This game practices creating and naming items in categories. Rapidly naming, helps work on building vocabulary and understanding concepts.

### Talking Tom:

A free app for all devices can be used to work on targeting speech sounds. Have your child say their target sound in words, phrases, and/ or sentences. Then listen to Tom repeat them back to you, then you decide if it was the correct or incorrect production of the sound. Makes practicing speech fun!



Board games are fun family activities that provide an effective way to enhance speech and language skills. These games promote vocabulary expansion, critical thinking, clear communication, and social interaction. By asking questions and teaching game rules, families can create an engaging and supportive environment that fosters speech and language development. Embracing board games during family vacations not only strengthens language skills but also brings families closer together, making learning an enjoyable and collaborative experience!

## Miss Sara's OT Activity Corner

### Summer Fun

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: Car/Toy clean up**-This easy but fun activity requires few materials, most of which are already available at home. Get 2 containers, one large, one small, place small into the larger container and fill with soapy water and some sponges or brushes. Fill other side with dirt/sand and place cars or toys into dirt. Then let the cleaning begin! Kids can work on their sensory processing with the various textures, fine motor skills and overall independence with this fun activity.



**Activity 2: Toy rescue**- this activity promotes ADL skills with use of utensils to scoop out toys from a bin of water. It also addresses eye/hand coordination, range of motion and fine motor precision. Fill small container with water, place into larger container, provide spoon and water safe toys and let the fun begin.



**Activity 3: Toys in ice**- this activity is super fun for kids with little prep or tools needed. Fill cup with water place toys in a small cup/container and freeze overnight and in the morning use hot water to get ice out of cup, then let the fun begin. You can add salt to the ice and use a paintbrush to speed up the melting process or use a cup with hot/warm water or kid safe tools to chip away the ice. This activity works on eye-hand coordination, grasp on a writing tool and fine motor skills. It will keep them cool in the hot sun!



**Activity 4: Name painting**- Grab some craft paper, paint, paint brushes, a muffin tin and some tape. Write your child's name on the paper, tape to wall/fence and let the painting begin. This fun activity promotes pencil grip, visual motor skills, name/letter recognition and so much more.



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

# Physical Therapy

## Summer Movement Fun!

Submitted by: Miss Caroline PT, DPT, PCS

Summer is a great time to find fun ways to move for the whole family. Did you know that physical activity in childhood can boost the immune system, improve mental health, and lead to better sleep? Daily movement improves bone health and muscle flexibility which can reduce the risk of developing health problems later in life. Being active at a young age can also build healthy habits early on that can carry into adulthood!

### How much exercise should a child get?

A child should participate in at least 1 hour of physical activity each day 7 days/week. Don't stress though, all physical activity completed throughout the day counts if is in 10-minute increments or more.

### What counts as physical activity?

Physical activity should be fun and age appropriate. Here are some fun summertime indoor and outdoor activities to get moving!



## Play in the Rays - Outdoor Activities

1. Go to a splash pad or new park  
Provides a fun opportunity to socialize with kids and other parents.
2. Set up a sprinkler or use your hose  
Have your kiddo jump over or try to run under the water. Also, a great way to cool down on a hot day!
3. Get creative with side-walk chalk  
Create a hopscotch board or draw targets to throw bean bags or a ball towards.

## Beat the heat – Indoor Activities:

1. Create a maze with painter's tape  
Challenge balance and coordination by having your kiddo step over and crawl under tape (laser beams) without touching them
2. Play animal red light green light  
Have your kiddo pick an animal (bear, crab, frog, cheetah) then listen to your cues for what speed to move
3. Set up an obstacle course  
Blankets, pillows, and couch cushions can be used to challenge balance. Try to make it across the room without falling down!
4. Have a dance party  
Do a freestyle dance or have your kiddo copy what dance move you do to challenge coordination

Please feel free to contact the CTC PT Department if you have any questions or concerns,  
724-942-6100.

# CTC Information

## Social Media

Follow Washington Health System on Facebook!



## Health Insurance

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



## 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](https://www.freedom-transit.org/forms/MATP-Reimbursement-Form-5_26_16.pdf)

WHS is proud to partner with Washington United Way



# Touch-A-Truck

**Sensory Friendly**



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

**Where:**

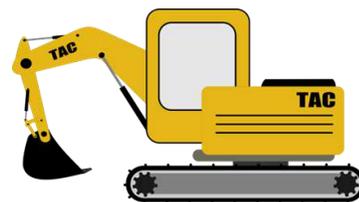
**Children's Therapy Center**  
 1000 Waterdam Plaza Dr. McMurray, PA 15317

**When:**

**Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**10 am-1:00 pm**

Please call or sign up in the front office to reserve your time before September 5<sup>th</sup>  
 724-942-6100

# Touch A Truck



## Osaic Foundation Award

### Mindy Zatta Receives Osaic Foundation Award and Grant to WHS Foundation in Recognition of Her Service

Mindy Zatta, Private Wealth Advisor, IronBridge Wealth Counsel, was recently recognized by the Osaic Foundation for her volunteer service and dedication to The Washington Health System Foundation (WHSF). Mindy is part of a group of financial professionals recognized by the Osaic Foundation for their hands-on volunteerism and the impact this level of involvement has on local communities. In honor of Mindy's recognition, WHSF has received a \$4,000 grant from the Osaic Foundation that will be used to purchase therapy positioning equipment for The Children's Therapy Center. The Center is the largest and most comprehensive pediatric therapy program in Washington County, PA.

"Thank you to the Osaic Foundation for this honor, and most importantly, for the grant funding that will support the Children's Therapy Center in offering rehabilitation services to help the children of our community. I am sincerely grateful for the Osaic Foundation and their efforts in celebrating and amplifying the charitable endeavors of Osaic financial professionals, and for my colleagues at [IronBridge Wealth Counsel, LLC](#) for holding ourselves to a higher community standard by investing our collective time and financial resource back into our communities," said Mindy Zatta. "I choose to give my time and efforts to The Washington Health System Foundation because I know the impact that is made on our patients and community through the many initiatives the Foundation supports like the Children's Therapy Center."

The donation will be used for one of Children's Therapy Center's greatest needs: an additional Rifton Activity Chair. This therapy tool is an innovative adaptive seating device that establishes safe seating and positioning for children with a variety of physical and or cognitive needs.



Front row: Sara Schumacher, Executive Director, Washington Health System Foundation  
Mindy Zatta, IronBridge Wealth Counsel, Steve Datovech, Director, UPMC Washington CTC

Back row:  
Lisa Capozzoli, SLT, Lisa Haines, SLT, Sara Knabb, OT, Marissa Stout, OT

Thank you to Mindy and the Osaic Foundation for their heartfelt generosity to our program needs!

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### About IronBridge Wealth Counsel, LLC

IronBridge Wealth Counsel, LLC is "a wealth management firm designed to provide security, instill meaning, and foster empowerment. The mission is "to create a positive, multigenerational impact on our colleagues, clients, and communities. For more information - [www.ironbridgewc.com](http://www.ironbridgewc.com).

### About Invest in Others Foundation

The Osaic Foundation's three pillars of focus are: Empowering lives through experiential events that build thriving communities, education with a focus on financial literacy, and increasing diverse representation through workforce development. For more information - <https://osaic.com/osaic-foundation-newsletter/2023q4>

