

Children's Therapy Connection Newsletter

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Raintree Portal Access

Parents and caregivers can access their child's therapy information through the CTC Portal using a valid email address.

The portal provides access to:

- Therapy Evaluations
- Session Notes
- Progress Notes
- Discharge Summaries

If you need help accessing the portal, please request an instruction handout from your child's therapist or our front office. We are happy to assist.

Winter Weather

As a medical facility, Children's Therapy Center remains open during our regularly scheduled hours regardless of weather conditions. However, we understand that extreme weather may occasionally make it necessary to cancel appointments.

To help ensure your child continues to make progress, we encourage families to reschedule any cancelled appointments within the same week whenever possible. Our front office staff is happy to assist in finding a time that works for your family's schedule.

Please note that all absences fall under our attendance policy. However, if a cancelled appointment is rescheduled within the same week, it will be removed from our attendance tracking system.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our front office, 724-942-6100.



CTC Superstars



Henry

Henry is an OT Superstar. He has been working incredibly hard to expand his diet and explore new—and even non-preferred—foods both in occupational therapy and at home. This past year, Henry set a goal to try 100 new foods, and he is so close to achieving it. He has grown so confident in himself and has shown tremendous bravery along the way.

Miss Marissa is so proud of you, Henry. Keep up the amazing work.

Cade

Cade is the speech star. Cade has been working so hard and he enters each speech therapy session with a huge smile on his face.

Cade loves Lightning McQueen and is very motivated to say “Lightning” and try the names of the other characters. He works hard each session and does a great job practicing new words and sounds.

Cade has also become very interested in using his talker to share his thoughts and feelings—especially when it comes to the movie *Cars*.

We are so proud of you, Cade.
!



Reagan

Reagan is our PT star. She works hard in therapy each week—both in the clinic and in the pool—continuing to build her strength, balance, and coordination. Reagan has made fantastic progress navigating the clinic independently with her walker. She also recently began cruising sideways along furniture and can now crawl up and down the stairs all by herself!

Reagan loves to be silly but is also wonderfully competitive. She brings joy to everyone she meets. Great job, Reagan.



Physical Therapy

Variety of Pittsburgh

By: Miss Carley, PT, DPT

Variety - The Children's Charity is a Pittsburgh-based organization that provides children (ages 3-21) with life-changing, custom communication and mobility equipment.

The following three programs may be available to your child:

My Voice

This program provides a communication device for eligible children living with a communication disorder. Each communication device comes with a communication app and a special case with a strap so it can be easily carried by the child.



My Bike

This program gives children with disabilities who may not be able to ride a two-wheel bike the opportunity to ride a bike independently. These bikes offer additional adaptations—such as seat belts, foot straps, headrests, and trunk support—that make riding safer and easier to propel.



My Stroller

This program provides an adaptive stroller that helps families move through everyday life more easily—whether running errands, going to appointments, or enjoying time in the community. Each stroller is custom-fit to the child, and its lightweight, foldable design makes it simple to transport and use, giving families a safer, more convenient mobility option.



How do I apply?

The first step is to determine which adaptive equipment your child may benefit from and discuss it with their physical, speech, or occupational therapist.

Eligibility requirements for each program can be found at variety pittsburgh.org. If your child qualifies, you can complete the online application, and your therapist will provide a letter of medical necessity.

Once the application is approved and the equipment arrives, you will be scheduled for a presentation where your child will be properly fitted, and you can learn how to use the equipment.

What if my child's needs change or they outgrow their current equipment?

Variety is able to fund up to 3 communication devices, 2 bikes, and 2 strollers per child once they outgrow their current one or their needs change.

Speech Therapy

Protecting Our Children's Hearing: What Parents Need to Know About Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

By: Miss Lisa MA, CCC/SLP

Holiday seasons and birthdays often bring exciting new gifts for children and teens—earbuds, headphones, gaming systems, musical instruments, and portable speakers. While these gifts can bring joy and connection, unsafe use of popular technology and noisy toys can place children and adolescents at serious risk for permanent hearing loss.

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), noise-induced hearing loss is preventable—but once it occurs, it is irreversible. Alarming, research shows that one in every six to eight middle and high school students already has measurable hearing loss that is likely noise-induced.

Why Adolescents Are at Risk

Young people today are exposed to loud sounds more often and for longer periods of time than ever before. Regular unsafe listening habits—such as listening to music through AirPods or headphones at high volumes, prolonged gaming with headsets, or spending hours in noisy environments—can damage the delicate structures of the inner ear.

Understanding Safe Listening Levels

A safe listening level is approximately 70 decibels (dB) or lower, which is about the volume of a normal conversation. Earbuds and headphones can reach 100 dB or more. The higher the noise level, the faster hearing damage can occur.

Additional Sources of Dangerous Noise

- Power tools and toys
- Hairdryers and small household appliances
- Concerts, sporting events, and monster trucks

Ways Parents Can Protect Their Child's Hearing

- Set volume limits on smartphones and tablets
- Use noise-canceling headphones
- Encourage listening breaks and rest ears every hour
- Pay attention to noise alerts on devices
- Ringing in the ears is a sign to stop the activity immediately

When to Seek Help

If you have concerns about your child's hearing, schedule a hearing evaluation with a licensed audiologist. More information can be found at www.asha.org/public.



This article is based on content from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), dated December 11, 2025.

Miss Sara's OT Activity Corner

Winter is Here!!

Being indoors can get boring, but here are a few fun activities you can do with your kids to help promote their OT skills.

Activity 1: Pouring Station

For this activity, you only need common household items. Grab a large plastic container along with various cups, measuring cups, and other small containers with or without handles. Fill each container with water, add a little food coloring if you'd like, and let the fun begin. This activity helps promote strength, hand-eye coordination, and even color recognition. Don't forget a towel to catch any accidental drips or spills.



Activity 2: Stuffed Animal Painting

Most kids have a stuffed animal or two around the house. Gather a few, then grab some large craft paper along with markers, crayons, or paints. Trace each stuffed animal onto the paper and decorate the outline to match the animal. This activity helps improve grasping skills and visual-motor skills.



Activity 3: Letter Scooping

This fun activity requires foam or magnetic letters, a large plastic bin, and a few bowls. Fill the bin partway with water and add the letters. Use large slotted spoons or cups with holes to scoop them out. This activity helps build letter recognition, sorting skills, and spoon-use skills. You can also add other toys that float or sink—as long as they're safe for water play—for even more fun.



Activity 4: Salt Tray Writing

This simple activity incorporates several skills including writing, pre-writing, fine motor, and sensory processing. Grab a small container, fill with salt, and let the fun begin. Have your child make their own shapes and letters, or they can copy a letter or shape from a card.



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

Occupational Therapy

Brains in Progress: Occupational Therapy Approaches for School-Aged Children with Executive Dysfunction

By: Miss Karlie, OTD/OTR/L

What is Executive Function?

Executive function is a set of mental skills that allow a person to remember information, think before they act, and adapt to change. It can begin developing as early as 6 months of age and continue into early adulthood.

Who struggles with Executive Function?

Children with ADHD and autism are more likely to have difficulty with executive function skills. Poor executive functioning skills may result in the following:

- Difficulty beginning or completing tasks
- Difficulty focusing
- Poor time management skills
- Impulsivity
- Disorganization
- Challenges with direction following
- Poor self-regulation
- Difficulty remembering information

Tools to Support Executive Function in School-Aged Children

Does your child struggle to complete school tasks? Whether the challenge is focusing, managing time, or getting started, try some of these strategies to help them better manage their workload.



Provide Movement Breaks

Moving while learning can improve working memory skills, which help us to remember and process information. Try having your child walk in place while reviewing flashcards or even do a few jumping jacks after a set of math problems to keep them engaged and improve their ability to remember what they are learning.

Color Code Tasks

Using a color-coding system helps to organize and plan which tasks need to be completed. An example of this is the following: papers placed in the red folder need to be done as soon as possible, papers in the yellow folder need to be done but are due in a few days, and papers in the green folder have already been completed. Talk to your child about their upcoming assignments to see what system would work best for them.

Build Routine

Routines are especially important for children with ADHD or autism. Establishing a predictable after-school routine can make it easier for them to complete homework on time and with less stress. If your child needs time to unwind after school, try setting a 5-10 minute timer to let them regulate or have a snack. After that short break, encourage them to start their homework right away. This helps ensure their work is completed early, allowing the rest of the evening to be spent relaxing without the worry of unfinished assignments.

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Occupational Therapy

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Brains in Progress: Occupational Therapy Approaches for School-Aged Children with Executive Dysfunction

Use a Planner

Using a planner can help children organize, start, and complete their tasks. Create a list of everything that needs to be done and have your child check off each item as they finish it. You can even add time estimates to tasks—for example, *Complete spelling worksheet: 10 minutes*. This helps your child decide whether to tackle the quick tasks first or begin with the longer ones, making it easier for them to get started.



Set Timers

If your child has a large project or a big test that will take several days to prepare for, try using timers to break the work into manageable chunks. Have your child set a timer for one hour in the evening to complete part of the project or study for the exam. When the timer goes off, they can stop for the night. This approach makes the task feel less overwhelming by dividing it into smaller, more achievable steps.

Talk with your child's teacher or occupational therapist about using these strategies at school to support their success in the classroom.

New Staff Members



Miss Olivia
Occupational Therapist

WELCOME

Olivia is a licensed occupational therapist with three years of experience. She graduated from Duquesne University and completed her doctoral capstone at Akron Children's Hospital, where she worked with children with traumatic brain injuries. Since then, she has gained experience in outpatient pediatrics, early intervention, and acute care.

In her free time, Olivia enjoys traveling, trying new restaurants, and spending time with her dog, Finn. She is very excited to join the team and cannot wait to meet all the kids and families at UPMC Washington Children's Therapy Center.

Information

Freedom Transit



Families of CTC may be eligible for reimbursement of travel costs 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

Free Diapers, Pull-ups and Wipes

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

When: Every 3rd Saturday of the month

Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Other Donations Provided: New and gently used baby/children's clothing, baby equipment, toys, etc.

Contact Information:

DIAPERPANTRY@PCBC.CHURCH and found on Facebook.

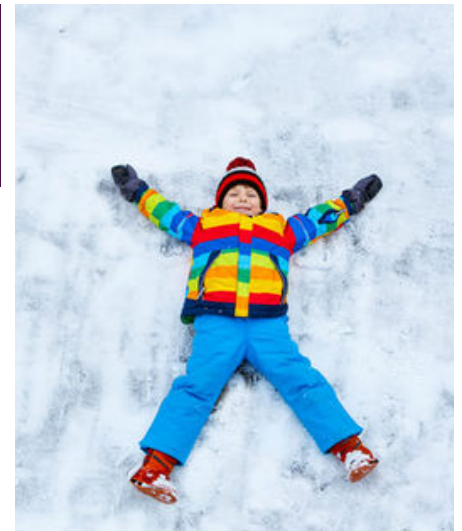


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CTC is proud to partner with



United Way
of Washington County



Health Insurance

Reminder: If your child's health insurance has changed, please inform us.

UPMC WASHINGTON

CHILDREN'S THERAPY

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