



*Happy
Holidays*

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Spotlight on Occupational Therapy Understanding Occupation

By: Julie Miller, MOT, OTR/L

After being asked to write a short "spotlight" for this month's newsletter the occupational therapy department tossed around several ideas. After several weeks of debate we settled upon sharing some of our thoughts about the word occupation. We realize that we use this word in a different way than what most people are familiar with and we'd like to share with you our unique perspective on this word.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (www.aota.org) helps us define the word occupation by suggesting that it is anything that we 'occupy' our time doing. For most people this may include a job we go to every day, cleaning the house, gardening, or doing the everyday activities to take care of ourselves. If there is a reason we can not do these occupations, and occupational therapist can probably help. Occupational therapy for both children and adults provides assistance and instruction in any activity that you may have difficulty completing. One of our core beliefs is that health is realized through engagement in meaningful occupations.

Children typically occupy their time with play, exploration, peer interaction, learning skills like feeding or dressing themselves, and being a student. Some children may have difficulty playing with their peers due to the strength and coordination required while others may have difficulty processing the sensory information from their environment. During our assessment process we identify not only how a child's skills measure as compared to their same age peers but also what factors may be inhibiting them from participating in their daily occupations. If you have had a child receive or have read an OT report you will notice that our goals are always occupation based. For example, we may work on strengthening hand muscles not just to be strong, but so that a child can better hold onto a pencil to work on age appropriate written work.

Our occupations change as we learn and grow. Infants spend their time eating, sleeping, and interacting with the adults in their world, toddlers add actively exploring their environment, and school age children learn to participate in school activities and play more complex games with their peers. We decide what occupations will be addressed in therapy based on age expectations, educational demands, and the children's interests.

As the holiday season approaches, everyone starts to look forward to spending time with family. Holiday dinners and commitments fill our schedules and most families struggle to balance the occupations involved in everyday routines and the special activities the holidays bring forth during this potentially stressful season. The occupational therapy department would like to take this time to remind all of you to find those occupations that are particularly soothing and fun for you and your child and to make time for them during the holidays. Reading a book together, going on a short walk around the neighborhood, or spending a few extra minutes snuggling can all be soothing and supportive for both you and your child during the holidays. One technique that may make changes in routines caused by holiday activities easier is to prepare your children for the activities ahead. Discuss these changes in advance and explain particularly disruptive changes several times. Children may be better prepared to work through difficult transitions if they know what to expect. You may even want to try drawing pictures of what will happen or making a simple book you can read together about the changes you expect. Just as we do during therapy visits, a simple "2 more minutes and then we are going to _____" countdown can help everyone adjust to what will take place next. The occupational therapy department wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. If you have any questions regarding occupational therapy services at PCDA, feel free to call or email anytime.

Exercise Choice... when it comes to making good food decisions.

By: Patty Novak

F3 Food, Fitness and Fun is Starting...

January 15, 2008

A 10 week
WEIGHT
MANAGEMENT
program for children
between 5-12 years
of age who are
overweight and their
parents/guardians/
siblings.

Our program is
designed specifically
for children with
developmental
disabilities, autism
and/or special health
care needs.

Instead of: Crunchy snacks such as: Potato Chips or Cheetos

Choose: **Pretzels, nuts (whole or slivered), freeze dried fruits or dry cereal**

Instead of: sweet drinks such as Gatorade, soda, fruit punch

Choose: **Water, bubbly mineral water, or mix water with 100% juice**

Instead of: cold and sweet foods such as Ice cream

Choose: **Fruit sorbet, popsicles, ices, or even frozen berries or grapes**

Instead of: Regular cakes with frosting

Choose: **Angel food cake topped with vanilla yogurt and fruit**

Instead of: Oreo cookies

Choose: **Graham crackers, teddy grahams, vanilla wafers or dry cereal such as Frosted Mini Wheat's or Honey Nut Cheerios. Make your own "Oreos" made with vanilla wafers Or Teddy Grahams, spread with low fat cream cheese.**

Instead of: Chips with dips;

Choose: **a tray of colorful veggies with dip**

Instead of: French fries

Choose: **to bake or roast sliced potatoes**

Instead of: fried, crispy taco shells, taquitos or nachos

Choose: **a burrito (hold the sour cream) or soft taco**

Start off the New Year with...F3

By Karen Wilson

Food, Fitness and Fun (F3) is a unique WEIGHT MANAGEMENT program designed specifically for children, ages 5-12 years, who are overweight and have developmental disabilities, autism and/or special health care needs. Our 10 Week program includes the **entire** family (parents, guardians, sibling) and focuses on developing health promoting eating habits and increasing physical activity within the entire family. Each weekly group session includes:

- Cooking and Recipes
- Fun Non-Competitive Sports & Games
- Nutrition Education
- Ideas to Address Behavioral Issues around Eating
- Parent to Parent Support

Our 2009 sessions are scheduled to begin in January, April and September.

For information and registration contact: Narine at (626) 793-7350 ext. 216. Funding may be available through your insurance or Regional Center (vondor #PD1730). Please check with your service coordinator.



Sharing Your Holiday Songs

By: Daryl Heater, MT-BC

One of the best and easiest ways to get into the holiday spirit is playing or listening to music. The sounds of holiday music often bring everyone together. Just think of your favorite childhood holiday song. Feel the emotions and memories it brings forth and share these wonderful experiences with your children. Holiday music from your childhood can share your culture and provide opportunities to convey emotions and meanings to your children. It also can provide children with the

opportunity to experience and understand others.

While singing holiday favorites, you can introduce your child to new experiences. For example, the song "Frosty the Snowman" can support dialogue with children about snow and snowmen, even though we are in sunny Southern California! While listening to the song, or even singing along, draw a snowman with your child, or together you can dress up like the snowman! Be creative, or follow along with the

description in the song. You can use household items, such as cotton balls for the snow, carrot for the nose, mittens, a black hat, etc.

In December 2008, students from the Music Therapy program and Adapted Lesson program will be participating in a Holiday Recital. The recital will take place on Friday, December 12th from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. Please join us for this year's Holiday Recital!



We apologize that our elevator is not functioning. It requires major repair, but this should be completed very soon.

Introducing your Child to a Family Holiday

By: Anne Davis, M.S., CCC-SLP

Imagine you are a young child. You wake up one morning and hear unusual noises. Your family seems to be cleaning or cooking. The odors coming from the kitchen smell more like dinner than breakfast. The grown-ups in the house are hoping you will sleep a little longer because they are very busy. What is going on?

It's Thanksgiving. For many families Thanksgiving is a holiday that involves feasting with relatives and friends. You may host the dinner or travel to another family's home. Often it is a special social day that does not follow the usual routine. A change in routine can be stressful for young children, but with a little preparation it can also be a fun learning experience.

Begin showing your child photographs of the people they will see at the Thanksgiving table. Some of these people may be very familiar (you!). Others may be people they see only occasionally. Still other people while important and dear to you are someone your child does not remember. Show your child a picture of each person. Point to the person and say their name, using the name that you would like your child to use or understand. If possible, prepare individual photographs of each person. Your child might want to play with these pictures or carry several around the house. Consider ways to protect the picture so that you won't care if something spills on it.

You could back the picture with cardboard or put each one in a separate zip-lock plastic bag. Then, when your guests arrive, your child could greet them by matching a picture to each person.

You can help your guests understand your child by providing the words you know your child wants to say. "Look, it's Gran....Hi Gran!" This can start the interaction started between the two of them. Now it's time to enjoy watching your child experience the wonder of a holiday.



to all who have made Contributions.

Vernon L and Margareth G Falls
 Maria Villaviencio
 Michael A. Anita Paleologos
 Yagjian
 David Lew
 John W. Plumb
 Marlene Khanjian
 Chonghyun Shin
 Choice Pest Control
 Lucia and David Shaw
 Sonya Pena
 Adrian Silva
 Bill and Diane Cullinane
 Rick and Michelle Evans
 Phillip Lee
 Leslie Rowan
 Charles and Dana Boyd
 Steven and Jennifer Nronek
 Lovebirds Café
 Ralphs Grocery
 Olivia Silva
 Sebastian and Dloan Calabro
 Kim Sakata
 Gerald Yee
 David and Barbara Bobier

WELCOME

To our new
Developmental
Interventionists:

Julie Vong
Verliz Llava
Lora Fyles
Farima Etesamifar

To our new
Development
Department
Judith Logan
Noreen Sullivan

Congratulations!

Promoted Staff

Melissa Nishimoto
Employee Relations
Christine Kim
Program Assistant
Julie Miller
OT Supervisor

PCDA Has its first Open-House as a Non-profit

After a long process, PCDA became a non-profit organization on March 1, 2008. We are now guided by a Board of Directors, and are reaching out to the community for support of our mission. PCDA provides a wide range of services and programs for children with developmental challenges and their families, but we would like to do more! Some of these ideas include Sibling Support Groups, Counseling Services, and Summer Programs.

Many ideas were showcased at a successful Open-House held October 2. Staff from each of the programs put on a display in the downstairs rooms. Upstairs, Dr. Cullinane gave a talk about the history and future plans for PCDA. Two parents gave moving accounts of the benefits they have received from PCDA. Mrs. Jones spoke about the accomplishments she has seen in her son Andy since his participation in Teen

Club. Mrs. Blanca Chavez spoke about the many services her son, Adrian has received and the positive impact on his life. Mr. Dave Bobier, a board member, also spoke about his son, Bradley, who has developmental disability, and the importance of supporting agencies which provide services. PCDA invites all of the families to join in support through your contributions.

Another successful Halloween Social!



Some of our clients and staff showing off their scary Halloween faces for the camera at the Halloween social.

We will be adding a "Family Stories" section to our website. Would you like to write something about your child and family and what you have done at PCDA? Do you have a favorite therapist or DI who you would like to commend? Here is the place! Please call Noreen Sullivan at Ext. 280 and let her know.

In the Community

Holiday Recital

When: Friday, December 12th

Time: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Where: PCDA Large Conference Room

Performances By: Music Therapy and Adapted Music Lessons Students



Movie Theater
Experience
Rules Free!

AMC Entertainment (AMC) and ASA have teamed up to bring families affected by autism and other disabilities a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment on a monthly basis with the "Sensory Friendly Films" program.

In order to provide a more accepting and comfortable setting for this unique audience, the movie auditoriums will have their lights brought up and the sound turned down, families will be able to bring in their own gluten-free, casein-free snacks, and no pre-views or advertisements will be shown before the movie. Additionally, audience members are welcome to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing - in other words, AMC's "Silence is Golden[®]" policy will not be enforced unless the safety of the audience is questioned.

Don't Miss the next sensory film!

Marley and Me

January 3, 2008

10:00 a.m. local time

For a complete list of theatres, please visit

www.autism-society.org.

**Pediatric Feeding Conference in
Long Beach, CA
November 15, 2008**



Turkey Tryouts



Lucia and mom decorate their pumpkin together at our annual Turkey Tryouts.

Upcoming Conferences

Pediatric Feeding

Assessment and Treatment

February 19, 20 & 21

*Tropicana Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada*

Nutrition & Feeding for Children on the Autism Spectrum

*April 14, 2009
Pasadena, CA*

Upcoming Community Events

Please visit the PCDA
booths at:

Tools for Transformation Resource Fair

April 2009

Special Needs Network

1st Annual Autism Re- source Fair

February 2009

*San Gabriel Pomona Regional
Center*

Walk Now for Autism

April 2009

Hosted by Autism Speaks

For more info visit
www.autismspeaks.org

*PCDA
Holiday Hours
December 25, 2008*

Closed

December 26, 2008

Closed

December 31, 2008

Open

January 1, 2008

Closed



Email: pcda@pasadenachilddevelopment.org

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Pasadena, CA 91101

620 No. Lake Avenue

Pasadena Child Development Associates, Inc

Dear Ms. Grace,

My name is Sosie. I am a mother of two autistic children with many challenges. My older son, Emmanuel is 10 years old, and the youngest just turn 5. It is a pleasure to share my personal story about my children's feeding problem, and how I received assistance from PCDA.

My younger son seems to be the one with the most need with feeding. Since he approached the feeding age, I discovered that he would not eat any kind of solid food. The only food he can eat was drinking soymilk as many times as he can during the day and night.

My son's doctor prescribed nutritious milk called Pediasure to enable my son to get the necessary vitamins and proteins. I was happy he was at least drinking the Pediasure, eat French fries, and crackers. However, I was still unsatisfied about my son's feeding situation. One lucky day, I went to PCDA in the city of Pasadena after I was sent by the Regional Center. I met wonderful, kind people who

were listening to my children's problems. After a series of tests and advises, a talented therapist Ms. Erin began systematically and patiently introducing my children to different kinds of foods.

At the beginning it almost seems comical. It seems that the children are playing food game. I learned that the children are unknowingly licking, touching, and smelling the food. Immediately I began to observe some changes in my children's eating habits. They began to try different kinds of foods, fruits, and cereals. Within a year time both my children started to eat different foods...such as pan cakes, waffles, fruit (apples, grapes, oranges, tangerines, peaches) and different types of whole wheat cereals and crackers. After a year of driving from LA to Pasadena once a week, I fell ill. To my disappointment, I was unable to drive to Pasadena. However, PCDA arranged a schedule to come to my home and continue

the treatment service under Ms.

Grace. Ms. Grace was an amazing therapist. She made my children comfortable and at ease, and they responded to her directions very well.

Now, it is a pleasure to inform you that my older son has exited the program because he is able to try all kinds of food. My younger son has recently started to eat sliced turkey, chicken nuggets, pretzels with yogurt, and fish sticks. Still continuously improving with his eating habits. PCDA feeding therapist Ms. Erin and Ms. Grace were talented therapist under the knowledgeable guidance dietician Ms. Karen. PCDA is still extending their assistance patiently, and systematically, and my son is still improving.

I am so grateful to PCDA director, PCDA assessors, to the staff, and especially to the feeding therapist Ms. Grace and the dietician Ms. Karen who is always there to come up with new ideas and feeding techniques for both my sons with patience

and dedication.

Finally, I would like to inform all parents with children with feeding problems, to follow the advise and instructions of the therapists strictly, and to make sure to practice all the techniques independently at home. For example, the first time when the therapist show you touching, kissing, smelling, and licking the food it looks like they are playing and unimportant. However, if you practice the technique independently at home you will see improvement.

1. Be patient with your children.
2. Don't give up. Progress will not come over night. It takes time.
3. Be creative.
4. Follow the therapist directions.

I hope my experience will help you and your children.

Sosie Habte