

Volume 1, Issue 1

Fall 2009 Newsletter



GILLEN BREWER SCHOOL

OT Quarterly

Welcome to Occupational Therapy

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! The occupational therapy department is off to a great start. We have enjoyed learning more about your children and have been having a great time taking “turns” with them. The therapists have been working to improve fine motor skills (coordination of small muscle movements in the hands) and gross motor coordination (large muscle groups and whole body movements). We are incorporating sensory processing (processing information from the five senses) activities into our treatment sessions and working with the school staff in order to incorporate them into the school day. We are looking forward to a fun and productive school year!



Shannie Easterby, Rachel Kirschner, Sarah Leventhal, Janet Krauthamer, Abby Futterman

Fall Themed Activities to Promote Motor Skills

Preschool Level Activity: Fall Leaf Rubbing

Participating in a fall leaf rubbing activity is a wonderful way to promote fine motor skill development. In order to complete this activity you will need wax crayons, a few leaves and plain paper. Take your child on a nature walk and pick up a few leaves, preferably leaves that have well defined veins. You can discuss the color, size, and shape of the leaves. Once you arrive home, have your child place the plain paper over the leaves, holding the paper firmly, so that the leaves do not move. Next, hold the wax crayon horizontally over the paper and rub over the leaf gently so that its pattern appears on the page. Enjoy!

Elementary School Level

Activity: For the older children a variety of Autumn themed activities are available on the internet. A great resource for Autumn crosswords and mazes can be found at www.dltk-holidays.com/fall/games.htm.

Special points of interest:

- *Welcome*
- *Fall themed motor activities*
- *Pictures from therapy sessions*

What does an Occupational Therapist Do?

The occupational therapy department is committed to helping improve each student's ability to participate in daily "occupations." Specifically we facilitate the development of visual-perceptual, gross motor, fine motor, self-care and sensory processing skills in order to enhance each child's performance and participation with school related activities. We also work on increasing your child's muscle strength. Occupational therapy sessions may be conducted in a variety of settings, including our sensory gyms, fine motor room, the child's classroom, or during a group sports/arts activity in order to support each child according to his or her needs. In addition to direct treatment, the occupational therapy department highly values its collaboration with all of the team members. As a team we work to maximize each child's learning potential and independence in the school environment.

-Improve Fine Motor Skills

An occupational therapist may work with your child in order to increase their ability to manipulate tools with their hands. It can be challenging for many of the children we work with to complete activities such as writing, cutting, and stringing beads. In order to determine your child's needs an occupational therapist will assess their current ability to engage in fine motor activities, develop an understanding of the underlying causes of the difficulty, and then work with your child in order to enhance their abilities. Typical fine motor activities may include: manipulating small pegs, sorting cards, picking up coins, practice cutting with scissors, and forming shapes with popsicle sticks.

-Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Children who have a difficult time standing on one leg, walking down stairs, skipping, jumping, or hopping typically have a deficit with their ability to participate in gross motor activities. An occupational therapist will evaluate your child's current ability and then work with your child in order to further develop their gross motor skills. Typical gross motor activities may include: walking on a balance beam, jumping over obstacles, throwing a tennis ball, or catching a playground size ball.

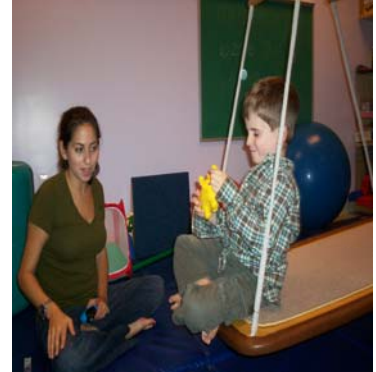
-Increase Strength

Often times children who require occupational therapy have decreased muscle strength. An occupational therapist will work with your child in order to evaluate their hand, stomach, back, leg, and arm strength. If a child is found to have decreased strength in one of these areas an occupational therapist will engage the child in therapeutic exercises in order to increase their muscle strength, which will improve their ability to successfully engage in their daily "occupations." Exercises may include: push-ups, yoga posture, sit-ups, or jumping jacks.

Having Fun in Occupational Therapy



Working out in the gym



Making our Muscles Stronger



Exercising!!!



Fine Motor Room





GILLEN BREWER SCHOOL

410 East 92nd Street NY, NY 10128

Phone: 212-831-3667

Fax: 212 831-5254

A community of Learners

www.gillenbrewer.com

Whats Brewing IN OT

How Else Can Occupational Therapy Empower Your Child?

-Develop Visual-Perceptual

Visual perception is a highly complex integrative activity involving understanding what is seen. It is a composite skill encompassing a number of subskills and a hierarchy of skill levels that interface with one another to integrate visual information efficiently. Visual perceptual deficits may make it challenging for children to complete puzzles, copy block designs, and identify an object from a complex background. Visual perceptual skills are often improved by addressing the underlying deficit areas (such as improving visual memory and spatial relationship

-Enhance Sensory Processing

Sensory Processing refers to the body's ability to take in and organize sensory information from all of our sensory systems for purposeful interaction. When a child is not able to make sense or organize this information from one or a few of the sensory systems, they are then said to have a sensory processing disorder. Children who have a deficit in the tactile (touch) processing system may find it challenging to tolerate playing with finger paint. Children who find it challenging to tolerate movement (swings or placing their heads below their bodies) are having a difficult time processing vestibular (movement) input. An occupational therapist can assist a child and their caregiver by helping them to understand what sensory system the child is having a difficult time integrating, and then work with them to address this deficit.

-Improve Self-Care Skills

Children may find it challenging to dress themselves, tie their shoes, or learn how to brush their teeth. An occupational therapist is able to break down each of these activities into small steps and then address the underlying difficulties in each step of the process.

Have a great fall!!!!!! The occupational therapy department is looking forward to meeting all of you at the Occupational Therapy Parent Workshops that will be offered later this year.