

All For **KIDS**

Pediatric Therapy Clinic

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Special Points of Interest:

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- AFK Social Group

What's New???

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Importance of Play

By Jamie Bleakley, OTR/L

Webster describes play as the state of being active, operative or relevant. Synonyms include frolic, fun, recreation, relaxation, and sport. These words paint a picture of action, spontaneity, enjoyment and interaction with others. Play is a natural action we are born with. Animals in nature have purposeful behaviors of play. Think of a litter of puppies rolling and jumping on each other, chasing and posing to entice others to imitate. Play is inside all of us. According to research done at Montana State University, 75% of brain development occurs after birth. The way a child develops gross motor, fine motor, speech and social skills is through play. Unfortunately, there are several factors that are inhibiting our children from being able to play, ranging from physical delays, cognitive road blocks or just the busyness of life. Play is the model that most pediatric therapists use whether it is for physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech therapy.

Living in a fast paced, technological society, a lot of people have lost sight of the importance of play. Most children are exposed to television and electronics shortly after birth. Many of the toys children have make noises or "play" for them. Parents have forgotten how or don't have the time to play. We have so many forms of impersonal communication (such as texts and emails); our children do not have consistent social interaction

modeled for them to learn from and imitate. Think of your favorite childhood toys. Most of them probably did not require batteries. The toys of the previous generations encouraged children to make up dialogues between characters or make animal sounds. They required twisting, crawling, standing, squatting, jumping, & climbing. Creativity was needed for building. Drawing and coloring using crayons, markers, or paint helped with development of hand use. Construction of crafts or block designs required fine motor skills and motor planning. It was important to explore the many sensory experiences available by playing outside or making craft projects. Sharing with other kids or dealing with the disappointment of them knocking down the creation just built helped with building social skills.

Play begins in infancy and progresses through adulthood. It is essential to development in all areas of function. Kids that spend time using technology are more at risk for obesity. Floor play encourages movement improving flexibility and balance. Children learn about their bodies by crawling in and around surfaces, high kneeling, walking, and jumping. Placement of toys can encourage rotation, bending, and up / down movement. Play also improves children's imagination, allows them to explore the world at their pace and test out beliefs of the world. Children with good play skills have a bet-

ter self image and are able to cope with successes and disappointments. Parents taking the time to play with their child build a sense of importance and self worth within that child. Guiding a child through imaginary play can assist with building vocabulary, word recall, memory skills and problem solving.

There are many types of play. There are games with rules or free play that has limited restrictions. Constructive play is when something is built whether small, like Legos or gross motor building, like building forts. Manipulative play allows children to learn through sensory experiences. Play can be educational or non-educational. It can be physical. Fantasy or make-believe play integrates characters and encourages development of imagination. Despite play being a natural action, some of our children are not physically or cognitively able to initiate these types of play on their own even though it is meaningful to them. They rely on adults or other children to assist them with play. A child's job is play. Encourage them to play and play with them!

References:

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Community News



Our Mission:
Dedication to providing children, families, and physicians with the highest quality services available.

- * **Sensory Friendly Movies at Century 16 Theaters** — Speak for Change, a self-advocacy group within Hope Community Resources, and Century 16 Theaters have partnered to provide sensory friendly showings of movies on a monthly basis for families or individuals with sensory processing disorders or disabilities. **Monsters, Inc 12/22/12**
These showings take place on Saturday mornings and regular matinee ticket prices apply.
- * **Santa Party 2012** — Stone Soup Group will host Santa Party 2012 on Saturday, 12/15/12 from 10:00am-2:00pm at 307 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Ste 100. They invite families of children with special needs to come and enjoy the holiday spirit in a low-stress environment. Santa will be available, along with festive activities and snacks. *Pictures with Santa are by appointment only* For more information, contact Stone Soup Group at (907) 561-3701 or visit their website at www.stonesoupgroup.org
- * **Anchorage Museum** — Admission is free on 12/9/12, 1/13/13 & 2/10/13. Also, visit the Wonderland of Toys on display from 11/23/12-1/13/13.
- * **Bouncin' Bears** is open for a special needs night from 6:00-8:00 pm each month. The fee is \$6, and you can check their website, www.bouncinbearsanchorage.com, for exact dates or call 52-BEARS (522-3277) for more information.
- * **Alaska Zoo** — Will host "Christmas for the Animals" on Sunday, 12/9/12. Presents for the animals are welcome! Also, the Alaska Zoo will begin "Zoo Lights". From front to back, the zoo is decorated with lighted animal displays. Zoo Lights will run Thursdays thru Sundays from 11/23/12—1/6/13 from 5:00pm to 8:00pm For more details, call (907) 346-2133 or visit www.alaskazoo.org.

The All For Kids BUZZ!

The Holidays are here already! Here is what keeps us BUZZING:

- * Our annual Halloween Festival was a success and we hope all of you had a chance to come by for some trick-or-treating! Please feel free to contact us with any feedback regarding this event.
- * Our office will be closed for the Christmas holidays from December 25th thru January 1st. Please look for your therapist's holiday schedule posted in the lobby or feel free to contact us if you have any questions.
- * We are sad to say that Amy Beane, CCC-SLP and Tracie Cline, MSPT both left us in September. Amy is continuing to pursue her dream of travelling the world. Tracie and her husband have been transferred back to Kentucky and are closer to their family again. We are also saddened to say that Tracey Blain, MSPT, CSCS left the All For Kids family at the end of November to spend more time with her family.
- * We are excited to announce that Lindsey Kennedy, CFY-SLP became part of the All For Kids team in August.



With Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas before us, we thought we would take a moment to express our gratitude. When we consider the privilege it is to be part of All For Kids, we really are overwhelmed. We could make a top 100 list and still have more to say, but for the sake of space, we'll stick with the top 5!

5. *Having a great space for working and looking forward to expanding our space (including the waiting area)!*
4. *Being able to provide therapy in new and innovative ways, like on horseback or at a rock climbing gym.*
3. *Hugs from precious children and grateful parents.*
2. *Being part of a group of people who are passionate and committed, smart and imaginative. You may not be fully aware of it, but the therapists and administrative staff at All For Kids are some of the best professionals and the best all-around people in the country. So grateful!*
1. *You! All For Kids is not just Tracey and Erin, the owners. It's not just the therapists and administrative staff. It's you, the kiddos and parents we get to rub shoulders with. We are always learning from each of you and it is an honor that you have invited us to be part of your journey.*

May the end of the 2012 give you hope as you look towards 2013. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Tracey Keaton and Erin Cowell

By AFK Staff

Regardless of what the calendar says, winter is already here! As many families choose to stay indoors and avoid the chill of the season, we often see a change in our kiddos as they acclimate to decreased outdoor physical activity, changes in daylight, and increased excitement over changes related to the holiday season. However, don't let the powder and plunging temperatures get your family down! We have put our heads together to bring you some ideas on ways to keep your child's progress going throughout the holidays. We hope you will find these suggestions helpful and fun for you and yours!

Change it up! The "winter blues" affect many of our kiddos and their families, but one of the best ways to stay out of a frosty funk is to change things up a bit (if your child can tolerate it). Schedule a special activity that includes movement, such as bowling, ice skating at the Dimond Mall ice rink, adding a trip to Bouncin' Bears, etc. Try scheduling a "family game night" with the option to invite friends. Games, such as Twister, Simon Says, Hide and Seek, Charades, etc. are fun ways to play with each other but keep those bodies moving. There are also many yoga-inspired games, such as Jungle Jive and Yoga Bingo, that are available in many toy stores.

Holiday Cooking Food is typically abundant during the holidays, so cooking is an excellent time to engage your child. Let them try to read/follow the directions. Measuring tools are also great examples of "bigger/smaller" or "more/less" comparisons. Encourage them to help pour, stir, etc. depending upon their abilities. During sugar cookie baking, let your child help roll out the dough, select and use cookie cutters, and decorate the cookies. Try mixing up your cookie cutter shapes and see if your child can identify which shapes typically relate to Christmas, Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day, etc. You can play "I Spy" with various cookie decorating materials (e.g., "I spy something with lots of colors that look like little sticks" for rainbow sprinkles). When your cookies are done, your child has an excellent opportunity to learn about offering and sharing with others. Being able to eat what they made or decorated is always a big reward for them, too!

Holiday Scavenger Hunt Scavenger hunts are not restricted to Easter egg hunts and picnics! Candy canes and ornaments are excellent objects to hide around your house during this time of year. There are many ways to vary this activity, depending upon your child's level of development and personal goals. For younger children, walk through the room/house with them as they search for their target item. When they find the item, encourage them to announce where they found it (e.g., *behind the door, on top of the TV, etc.*). If you are using items with different colors and shapes (such as ornaments), model the description back to them: *You found a reindeer! or Wow! A round, gold ornament!* At the end of the game, you can count how many items your child found. Older children could follow written "clues" around the house to find a treasure and address skills such as prepositions (in, on, under, over, next to), object function ("something you use to keep food cold" for refrigerator) and basic concepts ("a large green living thing with little red balls" for a Christmas tree).



There are many ways to change activities and make them into something new and fun! Plan an indoor camping trip, where participants set up and sleep in a tent somewhere inside your home. You can make s'mores in the microwave while playing card and board games instead of watching TV. You can also set up a miniature golf course inside, using cups/buckets for "holes" and putting clubs, hockey sticks, or brooms as the "golf clubs." Many other favorable activities can be adapted for indoor play. If you are in need of ideas, feel free to ask your therapists!

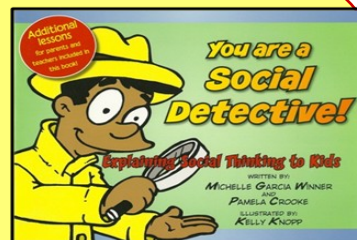


Your Patient's Results:

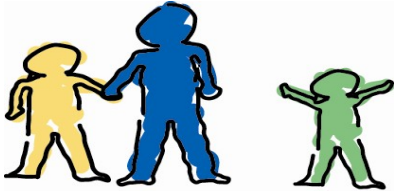
You may have already noticed these forms in our waiting room or been asked to complete one by your child's therapist. The purpose of this form is to let us, and your child's physician, know how your child is doing in therapy from **your** perspective. Doctors receive information from us on a regular basis, but don't always hear your feedback. Please complete a "Your Patient's Results" form and turn it in to the front desk or your child's therapist. When you complete a form, your name will be entered into our quarterly prize drawing. You may complete one form, per therapist, per quarter or include every discipline your child sees on one form. We look forward to hearing about your child's progress!

All For Kids Social Group for kids ages 8-13!

All For Kids will continue our social group for kids ages 8-13! The group will take place on Wednesdays from 4:30-6:00 starting in January and continuing through the spring. Occupational therapist Kalia Cook and speech therapist Nichole Chilson will be working together with the kids using ideas from the SUPERFLEX: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum. The curriculum brings kids through different scenarios that involve using their brains and controlling their bodies to think of others and defeat any number of Unthinkables they may encounter in their daily lives. Unthinkables are attitudes and behaviors that take shape into characters that can take over everyone's brains to make them less flexible thinkers. With Superflex strategies, the kids learn to defeat the likes of Rockbrain (he makes people get stuck on their own ideas), One-Sided Sid (he gets people to only talk about themselves), or even Glassman (he makes people have huge upset reactions). Superflex strategies encourage the kids to become social thinkers through understanding different perspectives, problem solve, practice flexible thinking, and provide methods for changing their own thinking and behavior. Group openings are filling fast! Call the clinic to inquire about availability.



Resources: <http://www.socialthinking.com/home> SUPERFLEX: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum by Stephanie Madrigal and Michelle Garcia Winner © 2008 Think Social Publishing, Inc. San Jose, California



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Best Wishes for Peace and Joy this Holiday Season and a New Year of Health, Happiness and Prosperity from the All For Kids Staff.