

About Us

The Pediatric Development Center provides speech therapy, occupational therapy and feeding therapy to children in Montgomery County, MD. Our team is composed of speech and occupational therapists, and specializes in the evaluation and treatment of a wide variety of communication, motor, feeding and sensory disorders of childhood.

Our quarterly newsletter aims to be informative. We provide tips and resources for families as well as programs available at the center.

Please feel free to contact Audrey Burns, our Client and Community Outreach Coordinator, at audrey@pdcandme.com with suggestions for how to improve our newsletter or interesting websites that you would like to share with other families. Ideas or tips that have been successful while working with your little ones are also welcome!

Stay informed!

Our website provides information about our services and the wonderful staff working with your family.

We are also on Facebook! On our sites you will find tips for helping your children at home, links to useful websites, and information about events being held in the area. Follow us now!

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Check Out PDC's New Pinterest Boards!

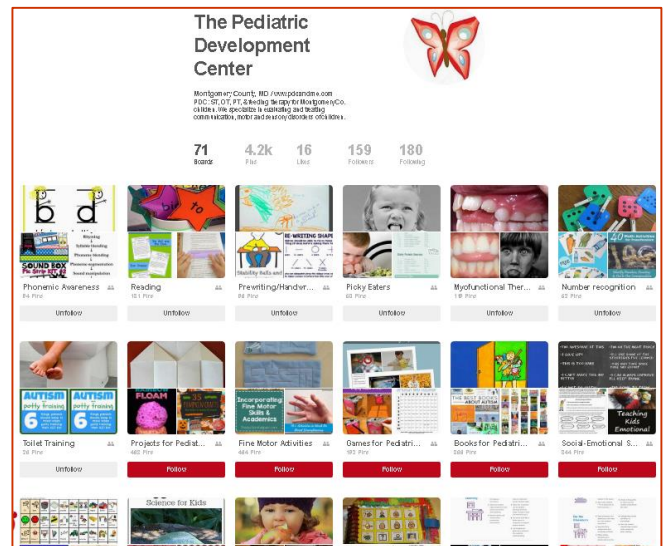
By Cathy Kusmin, M.A., CCC-SLP

Take a look at PDC's updated Pinterest site and boards:

<https://www.pinterest.com/PDCandMe>. Recently revised, reorganized, and expanded, our new boards are designed as a resource for parents and therapists, an introduction to what speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists do, and a source of inspiration about sensory activities, books, creative projects, and science explorations to enjoy with your children.

Three boards of particular interest to parents are Parents of Special Needs Children, Developmental Milestones, and Special Needs Children in Schools. The

first has general information for parents about special needs children and their siblings too, resources, supports, some common disorders, and "words of wisdom." The second contains a number of developmental guidelines and charts covering fine and gross motor skills, speech and language development, social-emotional skills, and the typical development of play skills. The third is specifically full of links to information sources about IEPs, 504 plans, and accommodations in school.



For parents or therapists looking for more information on a specific disorder, there are **boards for Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder, Dyspraxia, Childhood Apraxia of Speech, Central Auditory Processing Disorder, Pediatric Sleep Apnea, Fluency Disorders (Stuttering), and a number of other less common disorders.** Many of these have links to support groups, therapy ideas, or advice from other parents and therapists. For more technical links, look at the boards, Resources for Occupational Therapists and Resources for Speech-Language Pathologists.

Wondering what is a Myofunctional disorder and how will treating it help my child? Dealing with a picky eater or an unintelligible child? **Picky Eaters, Myofunctional Therapy, and Oral-Motor and Feeding boards** may provide helpful information.

Wondering if your child or client may benefit from further evaluation but don't know which discipline can help? Developmental Pediatrics and Neuropsychology boards may help you sort it out.

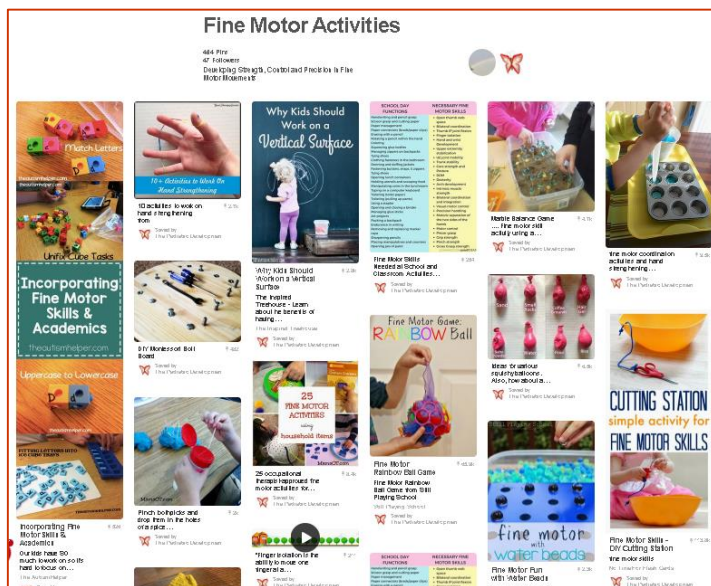
Want to know more about today's hot topics? **Social-Emotional Skills for Pediatric Therapy and Executive Functioning boards** provide basic explanations as well as ideas for therapy, both individual and group. Social Stories even have their own board. Too busy to play, or think that play is just what kids do when they don't have something more important to occupy them? Check out Play: It's How Children Learn to rediscover the importance of play in child development and how you can engage your child/client through play, while they are having so much fun they won't even know they are learning! You might even have fun too!

Is your child/client nonverbal or bilingual/multilingual? Look for **boards on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), American Sign Language (ASL), or Bilingual/Multilingual Children**. Need ideas for working on expressive and/or receptive language skills in therapy or at home? Check out Language Resources. Concerned about hearing or vision? Looking for information on adapting books for children with visual challenges? Look for the Hearing and Vision boards. Looking for books or apps? We have a board for that: **Books for Pediatric Speech-Language Therapy and Apps for Speech-Language and Occupational Therapy**. These boards include suggestions for books, book-related projects, and apps to use in therapy or for home practice and reading. Phonemic Awareness and Reading are two boards full of information on learning to read and reading comprehension. Therapists, and parents too, are you looking for suggestions for fine and gross motor activities, sensory activities (sensory bins and sensory play), how to use commercially available games for different therapeutic goals, projects for therapy that address multiple goals and promote engagement and spontaneous language? You will find them all here. Not to neglect the written word, Prewriting/Handwriting and Written Language and Grammar address, respectively, the mechanics of writing and higher level written language, grammar, figurative language and idioms, and writing paragraphs and essays.

Ideas for cooking with kids and science projects for cause and effect, sequencing, following directions, making predictions and inferences, talking and writing about your activity can all be found on our updated Pinterest site. Both cooking and science activities are good ways to involve the child in

learning by making the activity meaningful and motivating too. Lots of visual recipes for those with no or minimal reading skills. Science projects for all tastes: engineering challenges (build a tower out straws, build a catapult for kids), how does rain fall (shaving cream clouds), observations, etc.

Last, but certainly not least if you need them, we have **boards**



dedicated to Toilet Training and to Adaptive and Medical Equipment. We hope that these updated boards can serve as a resource, an inspiration, a source of quick therapy ideas, and a spark for further questions and new ideas. Feel free to let me know at catherine@pdcandme.com if you have ideas for other areas of interest or other boards we should follow.

Help for Hair Pulling and Skin Picking

By Michele Hayunga, COTA/L

When children pull out their hair or pick at their skin, parents often feel overwhelmed and upset. There may be stares from strangers, questions from family and friends, and confusion about what is causing these behaviors. The good news is that there are resources and help.

Hair pulling and skin picking are considered body-focused repetitive behaviors (BFRBs), a group of related disorders where people repeatedly touch their hair or body in ways that result in physical damage and interfere with daily life. According to The TLC Foundation (www.bfrb.org), research suggests that 3 percent or more of the population lives with a BFRB.

Fortunately, the research also suggests that young children often respond very well to treatment. When a child is 5 or younger, therapists at The Pediatric Development Center (PDC) work primarily with the family. They help parents analyze the circumstances surrounding the behavior, provide suggestions for sensory substitutes, and brainstorm creative ways to prevent pulling and picking.

For elementary school children, therapists work with both the child and parents. They help analyze the circumstances, understand sensory needs and develop a reward system that incentivizes the child to apply strategies they have learned.



Therapists can also help parents navigate conversations with their child, family and friends -- and other adults like teachers and coaches. Additionally, they help parents explore whether there are other co-existing challenges such as ADHD or learning disabilities that need to be addressed.

With middle school children, the approach is similar – but the child plays a greater role in helping to brainstorm strategies and evaluate which ones are most helpful. Therapists also help parents find the right balance of how involved to be in their child’s therapy. Keeping an eye out for emerging co-existing challenges is important as well.

Many parents are also interested in whether medication can be helpful in the treatment of BFRBs. According to The TLC Foundation, “No medication is currently approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for treatment of BFRBs, though a few have proven to reduce symptoms in some individuals. Medications

may also be useful in treating co-existing problems such as anxiety or depression.” Parents can talk with their child’s pediatrician or psychiatrist about whether medications may be an option.

To learn more about BFRBs and PDC’s approach to treating them, call 301-869-7505 and ask to speak with Michele. You can also email Michele at michele@pdcandme.com.

Michele Hayunga, COTA/L, is a graduate of The TLC Foundation’s Virtual Professional Training Institute, where she completed cognitive behavioral therapy-based training in the treatment of body-focused repetitive behaviors.

MORE THAN WORDS®

The Hanen Program® for Parents of Children with ASD and Social Communication Difficulties



Come participate in this parent training program!

- A series of personalized and informative classes for a small group of parents
- Individual sessions with parents and their children
- Evidence-based program
- Led by a Hanen Certified speech-language pathologist

Join us for a FREE parent orientation on Monday October 24th, 2016

The center will be running sessions in Fall/Winter 2016.

Please contact Jennifer at Jennifer@PDCandMe.com for information. “Help turn every moment of your child’s life into an opportunity to communicate”.

A Free Workshop for Parents: Staying Strong - and the Strategies You Need to Do That

Raising a child/children with special needs can come with its own set of challenges, and taking time for yourself may not seem like an option. Focusing on you, your emotions and your needs though can ultimately make you and your family stronger. Please join other parents and clinical social worker, Jennifer Udler, LCSW-C, for a special workshop on developing strategies that you will find helpful for navigating the challenges of raising a child with special needs. Managing your stress and emotions can be especially difficult when these feelings stem from your family. Your love and care for your family can be complicated when there is underlying tension. This workshop will provide you with specific coping skills for handling emotions often associated with caring for a child with special needs.

You will come away with:

- a better understanding of the root of your emotions
- ideas for incorporating mindfulness into your day
- relaxation strategies
- ways you can care for yourself

Time will be provided for questions, answers, and sharing of ideas

When: Thursday, November 17 from 7:15-8:15 p.m.

Location: The Pediatric Development Center, 12520 Prosperity Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20904

To register or for more information please contact Audrey Burns at 301-869-7505 or email audrey@pdcandme.com

Silver Spring Office Now Open!

The Pediatric Development Center is excited to announce the opening of our Silver Spring office. Located on Prosperity Drive — convenient to the ICC and US 29 — our second location offers speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and feeding therapy. PDC’s Silver Spring office accepts Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Healthcare. For more information, call 301-869-7505 or email audrey@pdcandme.com

Sensory-Based Sleep Strategies

By Alexandra M. Himes, MOT, OTR/L, CKTP

You know the drill: dinner is finished and the dishes are cleaned, your child has had his bath, pajamas are on, and it's time to unwind and turn out the lights to end another busy day. However, instead of nestling under his covers to catch some zzz's, your child may be more energetic than when he woke up in the morning! Jumping on the bed, taking out all the toys, unable to lie still, becoming upset. These are only a few things you may be experiencing as you try to put your child to bed at night.

Bedtime should be a relaxing time of day, and more often than not, bedtime is becoming one of the most stressful times of the day for many families. If you are experiencing similar sleeping challenges with your child, fear not! You are not alone! Oftentimes, children with sensory sensitivities have a difficult time with bedtime purely because they cannot calm their bodies down. Below are some strategies, tips, and suggestions you can try at home to help your child (and maybe even yourself!) fall asleep so everyone in the family can start the next day off on the right foot! *****It is to be noted that the following list of strategies are sensory-based in nature and not approved by a medical doctor. They are meant to be used as suggestions based on the theory of sensory integration, and unfortunately may not work for all children. If sensory-based strategies do not seem to be helping your child fall asleep, talk to your pediatrician for additional medical-based suggestions that you may need.*****

Sensory-Based Strategies

Tactile/Olfactory/Auditory:

- Lavender - Lavender fragrances can be calming. Use a warm lavender bath or lavender scents to help soothe your child before bed.
- Temperature - Determine if the temperature of the room is just right for your child. Install a ceiling fan to cool the room or increase the amounts of blankets if cold.
- Music - Play quiet/soft music to calm and soothe. Consider soft nature sounds (ocean waves), calming classical music, and other music without words to relax the mind.
- White noise machines, ceiling fans, or regular fans are oftentimes calming to children.

Proprioceptive/Vestibular ("deep pressure" and "movement"):

- Use down pillows or blankets to provide increased input to the body, as this medium is heavy without the input being too much to tolerate.
- Make a "cocoon" in your child's bed with blankets and pillows.
- Make your child into a sandwich. Place blankets and pillows on top of your child and press down slightly over his chest, arms, hands, legs, feet, etc. to provide increased input. You can increase or decrease the amount of pressure per your child's liking and tolerance.
- Have your child roll on his tummy over a yoga ball. Follow on the opposite side of the body: have your child lay on his tummy for input into his back by providing "squishes" with the ball over his back, arms, hands, legs, feet, etc.
- Provide gentle massage by gently squeezing your child's shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet, etc. as tolerated.
- Weighted blankets **BEFORE BUT NOT DURING** bedtime. If part of your bedtime routine is to read a book for 10 minutes before bed, consider placing a weighted blanket on your child's lap during the activity. Make sure to remove the blanket when finished as to avoid constriction or suffocation risks.
- Wearing compression clothing during the day provides increased proprioceptive input to the body to promote body awareness and deep pressure that children seek. This is also self-soothing to children **BEFORE BUT NOT DURING** bedtime.
- Have your child participate in gentle rocking or swinging (if available) prior to bed. Linear movement patterns on swings are calming and organizing to children.

Other Ideas to Consider:

- Provide your child with a balanced diet with increased amounts of proteins, fruits, and vegetables and limit the amounts of processed foods and refined sugars that have preservatives/additives/dyes. This is not only important for your child's overall health, but sugar also increases energy levels throughout the day that may make falling asleep challenging.
- Do not allow your child to go to bed hungry or thirsty. Consider having your child drink water before bed when thirsty. Provide just enough so bed-wetting does not become a problem. Turkey, eggs, beans, lentils, and oats are some examples of foods that contain L-tryptophan, an amino acid that encourages sleep.
- If your child snores, consider talking to your pediatrician about potential enlarged adenoids and tonsils. Removing these may assist with breathing and the ability to fall asleep.
- Use the same routine every night. Children perform best with routine and knowing their expectations ahead of time.
- Read a favorite bedtime story prior to bed.
- Use a nightlight if your child is afraid of the dark.
- Avoid or reduce naps during the day.
- Consider using the bedroom for sleeping only.
- Limit screen time to no more than 30-60 minutes per day. Instead, provide your child with sensory experiences throughout the day (proprioceptive, vestibular, and tactile in nature) to keep your child engaged and active.
- If your child has siblings that sleep well, have the sibling be a positive role model.

- Create a social story about bedtime to learn the routine of bedtime, what is expected, etc. Taking pictures of your child and inserting them into the story will not only be beneficial but fun too!
- Many commonly prescribed medications can affect children's sleep habits. Talk with your doctor about whether the dosage or timing of the medication may need to be adjusted.

If you have any questions or concerns, speak to your occupational therapist for explanations and other strategies that may work specifically for your child.

Become a PDC Yogi!!

Created By: Alexandra M. Himes, MOT, OTR/L, CKTP

Does your child:

- Demonstrate anxious behaviors and/or thoughts?
- Want to participate in sports but struggles with the competitive nature of group sports?
- Have difficulties balancing or seems to lack muscular strength?
- Struggle with social activities?
- Display high energy or an inability to calm his body and/or thoughts?

Then it is time for your child to become a PDC Yogi and discover what yoga is all about!

The concept of yoga is growing, not only for adults but also for children. As we take a look at how our children interact with society, it is becoming more apparent that the demands for children continue to increase. Teachers are reporting short attention spans and difficulty focusing in schools, parents are turning to iPads and cellphones to occupy their children, and kids are demonstrating less confidence to participate in social activities with peers. As a result, children are experiencing a lack of connection to their bodies, which manifests as poor behaviors, delayed motor skills, lack of self-esteem, etc. However, despite these challenges, there is also a current rise in interest regarding healthy eating, exercise, and a sound mind. Many members of our society are investing in and developing amazing tools and resources to help our children be successful and to teach children how to live a healthy life. Yoga has become one of those resources that is growing and used all over the globe to assist children with this search for a healthy lifestyle.

Despite the growth of yoga, there are many common misconceptions about the practice of yoga that may make you ask, "Why would my child be interested in yoga? Isn't yoga only about religion, chanting, and flexibility?" In the world of pediatric yoga, none of this is true! When your child joins a yoga group at PDC, he/she will experience a variety of fun and rewarding therapeutic exercises, poses, games, breathwork, and activities that aim to promote mindfulness and relaxation in a social group environment.

The following are only some of the many benefits of yoga practice that addresses the whole child, with hopes to lead to socio-emotional, physical, and academic success:

- Provides healthy ways to express and balance emotions
- Promotes a more relaxed state of being, which is optimal for learning
- Creates an atmosphere of confidence, enthusiasm, and non-competitiveness where everyone can succeed
- Eases anxiety and tension
- Enhances focus and concentration
- Supports social and emotional learning
- Improves listening skills
- Wakes up sluggish bodies/minds
- Improves posture
- Enhances motor skills and balance
- Improves mind/body awareness and teaches the importance of mindfulness
- Improves confidence and self-esteem
- Encourages respect for oneself and others

Many research studies have been conducted on the benefits and statistically significant improvements made by incorporating the practice of yoga into children's everyday lives. If you are interested in learning more about current research, please feel free to visit www.yoga4classrooms.com for a list of research references.

Two of our occupational therapists, Alexandra Himes and Jessica Gallagher, have taken the 18-hour certification course to become ChildLight Yoga Instructors to bring this amazing yoga practice to the PDC community! There are two upcoming yoga groups being offered at PDC:

- *PDC Yogis, Ages 7-10*: Tuesday evenings from 5:00-6:00, September 27-November 1
- *Yoga Mini-Masters, Ages 4-6*: Tuesday evenings from 5:00-6:00, November 8-December 13

If you have any questions regarding pediatric yoga, please contact Alexandra or Jessica at alex@pdcandme.com or jessica@pdcandme.com.

References: *Childlight Yoga Basic Yoga Teacher Training, Developed and Written by Lisa Flynn, Founder of ChildLight Yoga®*