

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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I LIKE TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT! 24 Outdoor Activities to Get Your Kids MOVING

Spring has sprung! It is that time of year again when we can stash away our heavy coats, hats, and boots and reach into our closets for our t-shirts and sandals. As the sun shines bright, the temperature rises, and the days get longer, we can finally dust off our bikes, tie up our sneakers, pop in those earbuds, and spend some time outdoors getting some much needed outdoor exercise. The warm weather always is a great encourager to get outside and give your body the exercise it needs to stay healthy, but did you know that regular physical activity is just as important for your kids? According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that young people aged 6-17 years participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

“Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels” (CDC). In addition to these benefits, physical activity assists children to develop the motor planning skills, balance, coordination, and body awareness they need to better navigate their many environments and participate in meaningful activities. Furthermore, physical activity in the form of “heavy work” can assist our sensory-seeking kids to receive the vestibular and proprioceptive input they need. With the warm weather approaching, putting away the iPads and encouraging outdoor play is essential for kids to develop gross motor skills. Not sure where to start with outdoor physical activities? Here are some easy and cost-effective ways to spend some time in the sun (don't forget the sunscreen!) and keep your kids moving!

- Biking
- Walking/Hiking
- Playing Follow the Leader
- 3 Legged Race
- Rollerblading
- Mother May I
- Jumping on/Catching Bubbles
- Hula Hooping
- Animal Walks
- Balloon Volleyball
- Water Balloon Toss
- Outdoor Yoga
- Wheelbarrow Walking
- Backyard Flashlight
- Scavenger Hunt
- Tic Tac Toss with Bean Bags
- Parachute and Beach Ball Pop
- Summer Olympics
- Obstacle Course
- Slip n Slide
- Tennis
- Riding a Scooter
- Playground
- Hopscotch
- Jumping rope
- Flying a Kite

Looking for functional ways for help around the house? Have your child help you wash your car, rake leaves for yard work, dig holes for planting flowers, etc. We can all use the extra helping hand! Now get outside and GET MOVING!

By Alexandra M. Himes OTR/L



Using Process Art and Product Art in Speech-Language Therapy

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

Portions of this article were excerpted with thanks from:
<http://kidstalktime.com/2013/06/using-art-for-speech-development/>

Art in speech therapy? Making a creative mess and problem solving on the spot? Talking or writing about your project and sequencing the steps afterwards using pictures of the process? Yes. Yes. Yes.

Process-Based Art Activities are open ended, child centered, and encourage your child to make something one of a kind. You supply the child with the materials and let them create, perhaps with a general goal in mind. The goal is about the PROCESS not the PRODUCT. This type of art fosters creativity, problem-solving, persistence and ownership of the process and the end result. I have seen improved problem solving and persistence, more initiation and use of complete sentences, improved pragmatic skills, and perhaps most important--a sense of accomplishment and pride in their own accomplishment! If the therapist or parent takes pictures of the activity, the child can sequence the pictures, dictate a story about the activity, or write a short story about how he/she made the project. The child can even read his/her story to a parent, friend, or therapist to practice reading aloud.

Process Art Activities also include: Encourage **Verbal Expression** in language-impaired children. We can use....

- **Descriptive Words:** to comment on what we see in their artwork, what it looks like or feels like. Rich vocabulary is often used when describing.
- **Action Words:** to talk about what we are doing (painting, gluing, attaching, taping, etc) as we create. Action words are critical to expanding overall sentence length.
- **Labeling:** to name all the items we are using to make the art (paint colors, brushes, art easel, etc).
- **Social Skills:** to request items, share supplies, ask for help, and wait their turn when necessary.

On the other hand, **Product-Based Art Activities:** focus on completing a specific finished product and do not encourage creativity or exploration. There is more emphasis on the "steps" taken in the correct order at the correct time to complete the project. There is usually an example given of how the end result should look. The goal is the PRODUCT not the PROCESS.

Product-Based Art can be used to Encourage **Auditory Comprehension** in language-impaired children. They can:

- **Follow Directions:** by listening carefully to each instruction given and following through. Written directions can also be used for children who are working on reading.

Silver Spring Office Opening in July!

The Pediatric Development Center is excited to announce the **upcoming opening of our Silver Spring office in July 2016.** Located on Prosperity Drive — convenient to the ICC and US 29 — our second location will offer speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and feeding therapy. PDC's Silver Spring office will accept Blue Cross Blue Shield and UnitedHealthcare. Help us spread the word!

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- **Sequence Steps:** by completing the project in an orderly fashion. Afterwards, we may recall these steps to explain how we made the project. First we, _____. Then, _____. Next, _____. Last we, _____.
- **Identify:** the items needed to make our project.
- **Use Social Skills:** to ask for help or clarification when an instruction is not understood. Wait for a turn to talk since more directions are being given.

So, in short, both types of art projects can NATURALLY lead to developing speech and language skills. By creating art with your child, you or your child's therapists are encouraging all of these skills and MORE. Don't be afraid to let your child handle messy art supplies and make one big fat giant mess. It's not something you will want to do every single day, but maybe during a special therapy session or one-on-one time with your child. Initiate the process and see what unfolds. The fun, learning, and sense of accomplishment that follow will more than outweigh all of the mess involved!

A personal note: Before joining PDC, I spent a number of years teaching two-year-olds in preschool and learning a great deal about the value of process art. Recently, I have worked with several clients to create robots or road maps. No two robots look alike. Road maps have included 3-D paper buildings in Dallas, TX, and the Aquarium and Port Discovery in Baltimore. Clients have written or dictated stories about their creations, volunteered information about airplane trips or escalator rides, had to solve problems on the spot (what do you do when your robot's arms or head fall off or your 3-D buildings won't stand up?), asked for help, and shared the pride of their creations with their parents and other staff members. One child named his robot "Sticky 9000." A 5th grader said he felt 'fantastic' about the city he 'made out of paper and cardboard.' A child who often has difficulty when things don't go as planned, managed to hang in there and create a robot that made her mother proud. She also told me to 'let me do it' when trying to attach the plastic bottle arms to the plastic bottle body. Several of the children who have completed these projects are on the spectrum and ages range from 6-11 years, both boys and girls.