

Southland SNAPSHOT



BROADENING the LIVES of CHILDREN through CARING and THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

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Summer In The South!

With Summer in full swing, we asked our therapists to share some activities and insights to keep your little ones busy and improving upon therapy goals! Next month we will have some insight from our Physical Therapists- this month please enjoy some Occupational therapy tips and activities!



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST MEGAN CHIMES IN ON TWO THERAPY TOOLS!

Weighted blankets can be awesome for kids who have difficulty calming down to sleep. The deep pressure input calms their nervous system if they are sensory seekers or sensory underresponsive. Another weighted material I have had success with includes ankle weights during seated tasks to help with attention and maintaining a regulated state. It gives some children the amount of proprioceptive input they need to remain seated and participate in structured tasks.

Another therapy tool I love is **Theraputty**. It's great for hand/UE strengthening and heavy work input as well. It comes in a variety of strengths depending on the child's strength and age. I love to hide little beads in it and have the children remove and then replace them. I also use it as an ideation activity where the child has to create a figure (animal, food, etc.) out of the putty and then I guess what it is. This doubles as ideation and hand strengthening, so it's a win win!

Congratulations are in order...

South Carolina Occupational Therapist Melinda Morris had over 90 visits in the month of June and not one unsigned note!
Great Job Melinda!

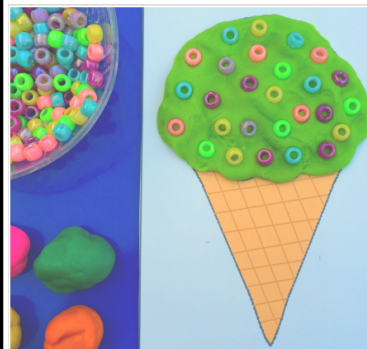
JULY IS... NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH

What's your favorite flavor?



Take a look at the fun ice cream cone activity below that will surely make your therapist ice-scream with delight!

FINE MOTOR/ SENSORY ICE CREAM CONE



Playdough Ice Cream Cone

childcareland.com

Print out the cone placemat from the website below or simply draw an outline of a bowl or cone on a piece of paper. Next, assist your child in choosing a color of play-dough to use as their ice cream. Guide your child as they practice their fine motor skills by rolling, flattening and patting the play-dough into the scoop

shape. If they'd like, they can also build on their sensory practice and push plastic beads or other small items into the play-dough as sprinkles! !

Activity courtesy of: www.childcareland.com/home/playdough-ice-cream-cones



Occupational Therapist Nicole weighs in on common therapy tools and their benefits! Take a peek!

Sensory processing disorder is a familiar condition known to many of our families and involves the brain having trouble taking in information from the senses and responding in a typical manner. While some children experience an overload, or are overly sensitive to input via one or more senses, others may seek additional input to properly feel a given sensation.

Today, there are numerous tools on the market to help provide this additional input- in a purposeful manner. It should be noted, each child who has sensory processing concerns takes in information and processes a response that is individual to them. Before investing in any sensory tools, it is advised that you open a discussion with your child's therapist before spending money on an item that may not be beneficial or can trigger the wrong response. Some tools out there can be very pricey and not a sound investment. Finding the right tools to carryover at home is a trial and error process and if possible, always attempt to 'test drive' a tool before making that investment as not every tool, regardless of purpose, is guaranteed to work for every child.

Some tools that crop up most often or are new on the market include:



- **Weighted vests and blankets:** These items are meant to give additional sensory input to help a child achieve calm rather than seek excessive movement. Vests are used throughout a typical day with a schedule to don/doff for the child to be aware of the added sensory input. Blankets are typically for use at night with children who have difficulty calming themselves in a typical manner for bed or have issues sleeping through the night.

- **Chew tubes, necklaces, z-vibe wands:** These items are meant to provide an outlet for children seeking oral input. Maybe they chew on non-food objects excessively including toys, shirts, or any

object not typically meant to be mouthed. Chew tubes and necklaces are easy, inexpensive items that simply provide a means for a child to seek this input by chewing/biting an object that will not pose a choking hazard or distract from participation in a more purposeful activity. Z-vibes provide the same outlet but one is able to change the type of oral attachment- textured, smooth, even a spoon attachment for use with picky eater and it also will provide vibration input. This gives a higher level of sensory input that can work very well with overly orally sensitive children.

- **Fidget spinners:** These have seemed to explode in popularity lately and I, as an OT, have mixed feelings. Yes, they do provide a manner for children to get added input, but I have personally had to remove them from the immediate area as they tend to distract my kids from focusing on an activity/task during therapy sessions. I assume the same distraction happens in classrooms also. My final answer: There is a time and place- at home, watching tv, on a car ride, down time in the classroom, etc- not necessarily a great tool to have around when a child must use their hands for fine motor activities!

- **Therapy balls/balance ball chairs:** These items can be used for so many different reasons other than sitting that I personally find them to be a good investment even if it is not necessarily meeting the needs of why it was originally purchased. Improving posture, balance, body awareness, providing a means to fidget and move while remaining on task and provide deep pressure are some of the various uses for this item. I personally feel it would be a great investment for schools to provide these as a standard mode of seating. The amount of time required for a child to remain seated and still throughout a school day can be a difficult task for the average child, let alone a child who has ADD/ADHD or is just overly active.

There are so many items out there and this is a very short list, but is meant to open the door on available options out there. Asking your therapist about possible items you are considering for use at home is always a welcome discussion!