

Occupational Therapy: Maximizing a Child's success through Early Intervention

By Charlis Robins, Occupational Therapist,
Learn & Lead Educational Center

A child's earliest years are filled with new experiences that provide stimulation that drives his or her cognitive, social, and physical growth. The first 3 years of life are a critical time for brain development, especially if a child has delays or is restricted in development. If a child needs support to ensure optimum development, occupational therapy can help. Occupational Therapy is used for children of all ages.

Early intervention provides children of all ages, who have disabilities or who are at risk, with help they need to succeed later in life. In early intervention, occupational therapy benefits children with many specific conditions (e.g. Down syndrome, autism), in addition to children with no clear diagnosis.

For children with developmental delays or a known physical or mental condition associated with a high probability of delays, occupational therapy can help improve their motor, cognitive, sensory processing, communication, and play skills.

“OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IS IMPORTANT IN EARLY DEVELOPMENT TO HELP MAXIMIZE A CHILD'S FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY.”

The goal is to enhance development, minimize the potential for developmental delay, and help families to meet the needs of their infants and toddlers.

Occupational therapy practitioners always work with the child and family situation in natural environments. These settings could be at home, at day care, or at the playground. Once a delay is noticed, a child can be referred for Occupational Therapy.



Once referred, an evaluation takes place and the therapist develops a treatment plan based on those findings and on the goals the family has for the child.

The practitioner **also identifies things that parents and caregivers can do throughout the day to reinforce a skill** and improve sensory processing or enable new learning. For example, parents might be concerned that their child cannot pick up food with their fingers.

An occupational therapy practitioner can work with the family to identify times during the day that the child can practice isolating her index finger and grasping small things. Together, the practitioner and parents might develop strategies to adapt meal times, opportunities to press buttons, and work on pointing to pictures during the bedtime story routine at night. **Incorporating therapy into regular occupations is a central tenet of occupational therapy.**

Occupational Therapy Practitioners:

- **support and encourage parents to engage with their child. The time a family spends working with a child in between therapy visits is vital.**
- **are there to support all the family and siblings.**
- **tailor services to the child's family and can be altered and adapted as the family's needs change.**



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How do we support children for optimal development?

Welcome to Issue 2 of The Nursery News, a free and informative and educational paper for parents and early years educators.

We aim to provide relevant research-driven articles on a variety of health and educational topics to better advocate for and support our community's children and families. These quarterly publications will include dates and times for our Educational Workshops Series to be offered monthly in The Nursery School.

It is so important to work together and offer ourselves and our children opportunities that enhance our roles as parent and educators.

Evieann Barber
Nursery School Manager



“We care for our children and so Together We Invest Time in Their Minds.”

FREE

Invest Time in a CHILD'S MIND



AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR PARENTS AND EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS



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Healthy Pregnancy and Gentle Birthing Using Natural Methods

By Marisa and Ed Shearer

Cultural programming and Hollywood movies have led us to believe that giving birth is a dramatic and painful experience most often involving the use of medical and pharmaceutical intervention. This doesn't have to be the case.

Through mindful preparation and education as well as support using natural methods such as acupressure, giving birth can be the most empowering experience of a lifetime.

Why is the mind body connection important in childbirth?

“The same energy that got the baby in there is the same energy that gets the baby out.”
Ina May Gaskin, midwife.

Relaxing and opening to the process of birth enables the body to do what it has been born to do. The mind body connection during labour and birth is powerful. The words spoken and support given to a labouring mother can have a profound effect on the opening of the cervix and the gentle delivery of the baby.

Continued...

About Our Nursery School

Our Nursery School provides high quality developmentally appropriate educational experiences for children 9 months to 2 years old, while advocating for children, parents and families. Our ratios are 1 adult to 3 children and no more than 12 per day. We adhere to the British National Curriculum and Early Foundation Stage. Our children experience a lightly structured day allowing them to feel safe and supported while enjoying a wide variety of developmental opportunities.



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How to have an empowered pregnancy and gentle birth with acupuncture

Preparing the mind mentally with birth affirmations and practicing deep relaxation techniques can help strengthen the mind body connection of the mother.

How can acupuncture help prepare the body for childbirth? Acupuncture is a wonderful way to reduce the mother's stress, tonify her vital energy, calm her anxiety and even increase her chances of going into labor naturally.

“THROUGH MINDFUL PREPARATION AND EDUCATION GIVING BIRTH CAN BE THE MOST EMPOWERING EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME.”

From 36 weeks gestation, acupuncture can help to turn a baby into an ideal position for birth as well as reduce the total labour time.

What is acupressure and how can it relieve pain during labour? Acupressure involves the application of finger pressure to specific points on the body. A qualified acupuncturist can teach these points to a birth partner which can be applied to the mother before or during labour. Acupuncture or acupressure can also be used as a



Marisa and Ed Shearer

natural way of stimulating labour instead of a medical induction, which results in more intense contractions and also increases the risk of requiring additional intervention.

How can acupuncture help with post-partum recovery?

After delivery, acupuncture assists the normal recuperative process by restoring the mother's vital energy and blood and normalising the flow through the lower abdomen.

It can help to stop bleeding and discharge, relieve pain and aid in healing a caesarean section. It is also ideal for preventing and assisting those with post-partum depression.

Is fruit juice dangerous for my child?

The American Academy of Pediatrics thought that it was enough of a danger to issue a policy statement about 'The Use and Misuse of Fruit Juice in Pediatrics'. In reality, there are a lot of other more important dangers to your child's health, but drinking too much fruit juice can be a problem. According to the AAP, **drinking too much juice can contribute to obesity, the development of cavities, diarrhea, and other gastrointestinal problems**, such as excessive gas, bloating and abdominal pain.

Among the recommendations of the AAP report, which are actually daily limits of how much fruit juice kids should drink, and not an actual recommendation to drink juice, are that:

- **Juice should be 100% pasteurized fruit juice & not fruit drinks or 'fruit' sodas**
- **Infants under 6 months should not be given juice**
- **Infants between 6 & 12 months can drink up to 4 to 6 ounces of juice a day in a cup not a bottle**
- **Younger children aged 1 to 6 years should have only 4 to 6 ounces of juice a day**
- **Older children should only have 8 to 12oz of juice a day**
- **Instead of juice, children should be encouraged to eat whole fruits**

Preventing Problems: One easy way, is to not introduce juice until your child is six months old, and when you do begin to offer your infant juice, give it in a cup and not a bottle. Older infants and toddlers generally drink too much juice when they always have a sippie cup in their hands, or if they are sucking on the cup like they would a bottle.



Lakeisha Gardiner-Wilson, BSc. Dip. Ed.

products, and doesn't have problems with cavities or being overweight, then he likely doesn't have a juice problem, even if you are exceeding the AAP limits.

If your child is exceeding the AAP limits and is a picky eater, has a poorly balanced diet, cavities, diarrhea, chronic abdominal pain or if he is overweight, then you should consider taking steps to limit his intake of juice.

The Benefits of Juice: Fruit juice is one way to get your child the 2 to 4 servings of fruit that is recommended in the Food Pyramid Guide. **A 6-ounce glass of 100% fruit juice can substitute for 1 serving of fruit.** Still, it is important to remember that the recommended servings of fruit juice are actually limits and your child does not need to drink any fruit juice. Fruit juice can be helpful for constipated children and fruit juice diluted with fluoridated water is a good way to get your child fluoride if he doesn't like to drink plain.



Although sippie cups are convenient your child is probably most at risk of getting cavities, since his teeth will always have sugar on them. To prevent cups from becoming a security object for toddlers, it can help to restrict them to meals, when you offer milk. It may also help to change to a "sport's bottle" type cup. **You should definitely avoid letting your child fall asleep with a bottle or cup of juice.**

The Juice 'Problem': One of the main problems with drinking too much juice is that it is filling and will decrease your child's appetite for other more nutritious foods. While your child will still get a lot of calories, they will mostly be from sugars or carbohydrates, and not from fat or protein, which can contribute to a poorly balanced diet. Also, **fruit juices generally don't have a lot of vitamins and nutrients.** Milk is a good source of calcium, other vitamins and nutrients.

Does Your Child Have a Problem With Juice? If your child is eating a well-balanced diet, including some fresh fruits and vegetables, is drinking 16 to 24 ounces a day of milk and dairy

JOIN US FOR A SERIES OF FREE WORKSHOPS - CALL 9465523

NUTRITION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKSHOP - APRIL 12TH AT 6PM

With Lakeisha Gardiner-Wilson, BSc. Dip. Ed. For all parents who want the best for their children. Want your child to do better in school? Children's brains develop rapidly and providing the right nutrients to maximise their abilities is vital. Starting early encourages good eating habits for later life. Come to the workshop to learn more!

ACUPRESSURE & GENTLE BIRTH WORKSHOP - MAY 11TH AT 6 - 7:15PM

Everyone is welcome to a free workshop designed for couples to learn these acupressure points as well as deep relaxation techniques to mentally prepare the mind and body for a gentle birth. With Marisa Shearer, Certified Yoga Teacher & Edward Shearer, Licensed Acupuncturist at Grace Bay Integrative Health Centre.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: MAXIMIZING A CHILD'S SUCCESS THROUGH EARLY INTERVENTION

SATURDAY 4TH JUNE, 9.30 - 10.30am With Charlis Robins. Early intervention provides children from birth to 3 years old who have disabilities, or who are at risk with help they need to succeed later in life. Understand the things to look for.

MOMS AND TOTS CLUB - Every Saturday - 9:30-11am. Join us for a casual, drop-in at the Nursery School. Only \$5.00 for non-enrolled children.