



# L.T.T.C. NEWS

November 2009 Issue 3 Learning Tree Therapy Centre

3 Pearson Place,  
Floreat. WA  
6014  
PH:9387 8538

## In This Issue

- Upcoming Events – Look Into My Eyes Parent Day
- Reflections on the DIR institute
- Training News
- Mentoring groups

Welcome to our Learning Tree Therapy Centre newsletter. This newsletter is put together for our families and colleagues as a way of informing you about news relating to the LTTTC as well as Sensory Connections Occupational Therapy Services and Anne Nunn, Speech and Language Pathology Services which are the two practices that currently make up the Learning Tree Therapy Centre.

Since our last newsletter in June we have had a very busy productive period ! Sharon and Kathy travelled overseas to the US during July to participate in the DIR training institute in California. Congratulations to Sharon who has now moved into the advanced stages in the DIR® certificate training process. In addition to this trip Kathy travelled interstate presenting DIR® training programs in Melbourne and Brisbane during September.

Upcoming for Term 4 there is the " Look into my Eyes" Parent Training and Support Day coming up on November 7<sup>th</sup> ( see below) which we are particularly thrilled to be assisting with. More good news is that this term we are welcoming Karen Blair, Occupational Therapist, into our team. Karen has extensive experience as an paediatric OT working in multi disciplinary teams covering a wide range of paediatrics experience as well as mental health experience. Karen moved to Perth from her native Scotland several years ago and we are delighted that she is coming on board with us to assist us with the growing demand for services.

We are currently planning for 2010 which is not so far away! . Programs for children and families offered early in the year will include our January summer Floortime group therapy intensives which this year will be directed by Sharon Campbell. As a response to the need that we have identified to meet the needs of parents with newly diagnosed children on the autistic spectrum and /or those with regulatory challenges we are also planning to offer a therapeutic playgroup program facilitated by Kathy and Anne from February 2010. Please feel free to discuss with us if you are keen for your child and yourself to be involved in any of these programs. More specific information will be posted on the sensory connections website.

## Upcoming Event For Parents on Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>



### “ Look into My Eyes: A Day of Sharing by , For, and With Parents of children with Relating and Communicating Challenges such as Autism “

This is a unique training and support day for parents that is not to be missed! A number of local parents will be presenting their experiences and sharing their expertise and insights, and offering strategies and ideas on how they have supported their child's relating, communicating and learning. The aim of this day is to support parents in their daily lives. Refreshments and a delicious lunch at the venue, the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle is included as part of the day.

3 Pearson Place,  
Floreat, WA.  
6014  
Ph 08 9387 8534



Kathy  
Walmsley

Occupational  
Therapist



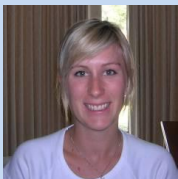
Anne Nunn,  
Speech and  
Language  
Pathologist



Yvonne Buters  
Occupational  
Therapist



Sharon Campbell  
Occupational  
Therapist &  
Physiotherapist



Joanna  
VanLeeuwen &  
Jessica Salmone  
Therapy Support  
Workers



Our belief is that parents have a wealth of experience and knowledge that needs to be shared with others! We are privileged to be able to work with some amazing parents who are willing to offer their expertise, and insights to support other parents. Much gratitude goes to those parents who have offered to present, as well as to those parents who have offered background assistance. We encourage parents to register so that they don't miss out on this training as this will be a very special day of learning and networking. The flyer is on the sensory connections website at [www.sensoryconnections.com.au](http://www.sensoryconnections.com.au) and gives more specific details of the day.

The Perth "Look Into My Eyes" parent day is a non profit event which is being supported by funding from the Learning Tree Parent Playgroup ( a non profit organisation). All presenters and facilitators are providing their services free of charge. The cost is \$85.00 per parent attending. Donations towards the cost of the day are very welcome for those who are able to offer financial support to benefit other more needy families who may need sponsorship to be able to attend. Registration is online via the sensory connections website at <http://www.sensoryconnections.com.au/events.php>

**VERY IMPORTANT - Please select the Pay by other option on the website when making a payment ( EFT or cheques are accepted via this option ) Do not select Pay Pal or credit card options.**

For general enquires please contact Kathy on 0424 288 779. For enquiries about sponsorship, donations please contact Linda Payne at [linda\\_payne@inet.net.au](mailto:linda_payne@inet.net.au)

### [Reflections on the DIR Institute 2009 in California.](#)

By Sharon Campbell

Just a few words and impressions to share with families and colleagues, following my return from a very intense five days in July at the Asilomar conference grounds in California that left me freshly inspired and rejuvenated! Some of the few outstanding impressions that I left the institute with include the parent piece of the work that we do in DIR. I felt so humbled by the many case presentations and the honesty and openness that was shared particularly in a presentation on the final morning titled " The Parent Experience" " by Jeannie Gutierrez , Clinical psychologist – This presentation in particular just blew me away. Parents are one of the most central elements to this model and this was reinforced in a powerful and meaningful way in the research that she presented that outlined the joys and struggles of each family ( who were living with children with significant regulatory disorders ) journey. I also appreciated the presentation on post – institutionalised children by Sharon Cermak ( OT ) although I found it challenging to process I was glad for the bigger perspective – as in the bigger picture on a global scale and being reminded of the presence of children across the world, including in countries not as privileged as ours. Lastly just to add how amazing it was to be surrounded by clinicians of such high caliber – including those within our Australian cohort! It was so incredibly inspiring to listen to and speak with other therapists, across many disciplines, who have such a depth of knowledge in their own field, whether it be OT, speech, psych – who can then present it in a language and manner that pulls together the D, the I and the R so beautifully – there were many `aha' moments! I too will be following up the Institute by adding mental health supervision to that which I am already receiving in my own field.

**DIR Corner** Website Discovery : Visit Dr Josh Feder's blog page. [http://www.circlestretch.com/About\\_Us.html](http://www.circlestretch.com/About_Us.html)

Dr Feder is a child psychiatrist from San Diego, who uses the DIR® approach in his work and has a particular interest in supporting children in educational settings. This blog has a wealth of information and resources.

### [Thinking about " Family Centred Practice "](#)

By Kathy Walmsley

Recently I have been thinking more about the term " Family Centred Practice" which is now widely considered to be the " gold standard" of practice for children with developmental disabilities such as autism.



Dr Barry Prizant, a renowned speech and language pathologist and researcher, has written several very helpful articles for the Autism Spectrum Quarterly, a US based publication. In these he outlines some of his insights and thoughts gained over 40 years of working in the autism field about family centred practice and these are particularly targeted at supporting parents who are navigating the vast arrays of autism treatments and programs that are now available.

Some of these articles can be downloaded as pdf files from the following website

<http://pasadenachilddevelopment.org/articles.html>

Scroll down the list to find them - they include -:

- ✓ Finding Balance
- ✓ Parent Professional Relationships – it's a matter of trust
- ✓ Treatment options and parent choice – series of three articles the first being -: Prizant, B.H. SLP " Treatment Options and Parent Choice: An individualized approach to intervention" 2008 Winter Ed. Autism Spectrum Quarterly.

In the abovementioned article on an individualized approach to intervention, Dr Prizant describes family centred practice in terms of..

" the focus is not primarily on the techniques used, or even the specific curricula developed for children with autism. Goals and programmatic priorities emanate from family priorities, and the individual strengths and needs of each child. "

Dr Prizant describes the multiple benefits when professionals collaborate with parents in family centered practice. These include:

1. Parents gain a greater sense of control – Uncertainty about a child's future and even how a child will act and react to everyday challenges, naturally creates a high degree of anxiety for many parents. Family centred practice focuses on collaborative problem solving and future directions.
2. Individual differences in children and families are respected – goals emanate from family priorities and the individual strengths and needs of each child rather than from a pre prescribed curricula.
3. Priorities and goals for treatment and educational programming are shared by parents and professionals.
4. A long term perspective is taken so that parents can develop the skills and strategies to face future challenges. Parental competence in decision making is fostered by professionals.

Parents need to be supported in a collaborative way to develop an understanding of their child's unique individual profile of strengths and challenges, to play an active role in supporting their child's development, and in developing the knowledge to know how to advocate for their child. Family centred practice makes a lot of sense – I was reminded as I read these articles that as professionals, we are really little "blips" on the lifespan of a child - the child's relationship with family members is what is sustained over that lifespan.

---

## *Floortimers Australia List serve For Networking, Support & Resource Information*

This is an egroups Listserve and discussion groups for parents & professionals that has been operating now for 2 ½ years and currently has over 250 members. The goal is to provide an opportunity for sharing information and resources about DIR/Floortime in this region. The link to this group is

<http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/floortimersaus/> Please feel free to join the group as this is a great way to find out about events and resources as well as a way for parents to seek support and tips from other parents.

3 Pearson Place,  
Floreat, WA.  
6014  
Ph 08 9387 8534

## TRAINING NEWS

Term 4, 2009

### *Regional Trainings / Upcoming Events :*

Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>

#### **Look Into My Eyes Day for Parents**

The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle WA. *To download the brochure with details regarding this training opportunity visit [www.sensoryconnections.com.au](http://www.sensoryconnections.com.au) Go to the Events page to register*

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November,  
Communication and Language Development, therapy and  
assessment in DIR / Floortime

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November,

#### Integrating DIR / Floortime into Education.

Presenter : Michelle Ricamato, SLP, ICDL Faculty, Morphettville, Adelaide SA  
Contact TALK Speech Pathology 08 8342 6653  
<http://www.talktraining.com.au/calendar.html>

Getting Kids in Sync: Online Seminar  
Accessible from November 1<sup>st</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>

A sensory processing approach to challenges associated with  
autism, adhd/add, learning and behavioural disorders.

Presenter: Gen Jereb OTR

Register via [www.sensorytools.net](http://www.sensorytools.net)

---

### **DIR® Floortime**

#### **2010 Professional Support & Mentoring Groups**

We are currently planning to continue with our very popular mentoring / tutoring group programs in 2010 – please let Kathy know on [kwalmsley@sensoryconnections.com.au](mailto:kwalmsley@sensoryconnections.com.au) or call 0424 288 779 if you are interested in participating.

Our pre requisite is that you have completed an introductory level DIR® training.

---

3 Pearson Place,  
Floreat, WA 6014

PH: 9387 8538

