



Occupational Therapy at WMSLT



Enhancing Learning and Well-being: Primary Students Engage in Occupational Therapy Sensory Group!

This term the Occupational Therapy Team at WMSLT have been busy supporting groups of students to understand their sensory systems and providing opportunities to explore and identify useful strategies. Therapists have used two approaches to help design the group programme including 'The Alert Program' designed by Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger, and the Autism Level Up programme designed by Amy & Jac.

'The Alert Programme' introduces the concept that our body can be compared to a 'car engine' and can run at different speeds, such as slow (low energy, tired, sluggish, sad), just right (calm, focussed), or fast (excited, angry, scared, upset). Whereas, the 'Autism Level Up' programme focuses on energy levels. Both of these programmes identify that sensory tools /strategies can be used to help with our 'engine / energy levels', which will support self-regulation and readiness for learning.

Here are some of the wonderful dials the students created in their first session!



Sessions have been very interactive with students creating personalised engine / energy dials (great for observation of fine motor skills too!), exploring when their engine speed / energy levels dip or increase, and exploring different tools to support 'just right' engine speeds / energy levels for participation in school based activities and learning.

Students (and the therapists!) had great fun exploring a whole range of sensory activities to see what impact they had on their engine / energy levels. Movement based activities were the students favourites for helping regulate their sensory systems. They found going for a walk, stacking chairs and doing stretches the most effective. They also enjoyed exploring tactile activities including fluffy and silky materials, sand, playdoh and visual activities such as sensory bottles, spinning tops and slow-moving graphics.

Check out some of the resources and activities the students have had fun exploring!



We also listened to different types of music and sounds; music with a fast beat and a slow beat as well as white noise and brown noise noticed the impact on 'our engines'. The brown noise even made some of the students start yawning and nearly went to sleep!



Both approaches were really useful and students developed their awareness and understanding of the sensory systems and strategies they can use to help them feel calm and focussed, and above all they had fun! This term students will have a focus on individual sessions to look at how their engine / energy levels change throughout the day, and explore ways to incorporate their identified useful sensory activities into their daily routine. We are looking forward to working with them soon and supporting them to feel calm and focussed and to enjoy school.



Supporting Parents - Workshop Round Up!



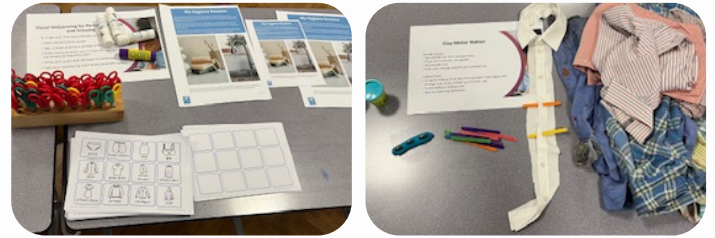
This academic year, we have been working closely with our schools to provide an increased number of in-person parent workshops / coffee mornings, with the aim of educating, supporting and empowering parents to support their children with occupational therapy needs. Workshop topics have included identifying and supporting sensory needs at home, developing independence skills (with a focus on self-care skills), school readiness and supporting motor coordination challenges.

Last week, after working closely with the SENCO of a Junior school, we held our first interactive / activity focused workshop with both parents and children present. Historically, parent numbers and engagement in workshops, at this particular school, had been low, however sessions with parent / children interaction had seen greater attendance. Therefore, in line with the school needs, we developed a bespoke session which included a short brainstorming session around the importance of personal hygiene, before a parents and children were directed to activity stations.



Parents and children worked together to develop visual sequencing charts for washing, dressing, brushing teeth and the morning routine, and engaged in a series of play based activities to practice underlying skills for dressing and self-care tasks. The session had a great turn out, and it was lovely to see so many parents and children engaging in the activities together. There were BIG smiles all round from the children, especially when they were successful at an activity (the shoelace station was a huge hit) that they had previously found difficult to achieve!

The interactive nature of this workshop was a hit, and as a service, we will definitely be using this format for our future workshops.



Have a look at the feedback provided by the parents who have attended our workshops!

"I have found the workshop very useful and informative. It will certainly influence my approach to my children, and had helped with my understanding of some of their behaviours".

"The workshop has provided me with more ideas on how to prepare my child for sensory experiences. Please come back with more help and strategies!".

"There have been so many fun activities to try out! My child doesn't normally engage, it was lovely to see him participating".

"The activities and interaction has been really enjoyable".

Strategy Spotlight

Backwards Chaining - A learning technique to support skill development, great for supporting independence with dressing skills! We had many successes using this technique during our interactive workshop, especially with shoelaces.



Izzy, Newly Qualified OT, reflects on her first term at WMSLT

"My first term at WMSLT has been really interesting! I have learnt a lot since starting, from getting a real insight into working with children to learning about sensory behaviours and how these may present. Being an NQP with minimal experience working with children, I was worried about how this may affect me, however I have been given opportunity to expand my understanding on a variety of interventions including work around handwriting, zones of regulation, gross and fine motor skills as well as building on my observational and assessment skills. I have felt extremely supported throughout, and the WMSLT team has been a lovely one to be part of. I am very happy that I get to start my journey as a qualified occupational therapist in this team, working with children and aiming to make a positive difference to young people's lives – I am excited for what's to come!"



Shine the Light Award



This term's OT 'Shine the light' award goes to.....

Sam Young at Tile Cross Academy!

Sam is amazing. She is very motivated and enthusiastic and works hard to support the students she works with. Sam is very creative and is always looking at ways of making activities interesting and engaging; and even buys lots of fab resources, including a teeth model to practice brushing teeth with a student. She is super organised and is a pleasure to work with.



Sam, thank you for all your hard work. You have won some resources for your school!

SaLT Resource of the Term - Dig in!

Our Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants have been using the 'Dig in!' game to support a number of different communication areas during therapy this half term. We have found it to be a great resource to support turn taking, vocabulary building, word finding, and speech sounds when working both 1:1 with a child or with a small group. The children have loved it too!

Check out our social media for ideas and videos of how to use Dig in! in your interventions.



Ramadan: March/April 2024

Ramadan is a sacred month in which Muslims across the world embrace spiritual growth and deepen their connection with Allah. Our school students & families, colleagues, and Uni Students may observe fasting from dawn to sunset, with changes to daily routines.

It's important to be mindful of possible adjustments to our practice, and any personal challenges associated with fasting. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists have worked with their Muslim members to create guidance around supporting Muslims this month. **Access [this here](#).**

Find us on Social Media!



@WMISLT2



@wm_sl_t_ot



@West Midlands Speech
and Language Therapy

