

imagine

Developmental Pathways for Kids



The Power of Play at DPK

“How did a traditional PT become a play guru?”

This was the question that a parent asked in December. It took me a minute to come up with my answer. As most of you know, I have been a practicing pediatric physical therapist since 1985. And as a mom of four girls, I have also been a practicing parent since my daughter Jessica's birth in 1985. When *did* I become a play guru???

The truth is that I have always been interested in children's play and imagination and have found ways to incorporate playfulness into my life practice. But, I didn't really discover the magic and the “power” of play for atypically developing children until 1997.

When DPK first opened the doors of our playhouse we decided to embark on a new experiment. Following the research and practice of Pamela Wolfberg, Ph.D., the model of sensory integration-based playgroups was

born. Drawing from current research and practice, we designed a program which would provide an exceptional opportunity for the development of peer play by addressing sensory processing, self-regulation and social competence within the context of a playgroup with typically developing peers. The idea was to give kids the “just right challenge” based on sensory integration principles during peer interaction experiences.

What happened was absolutely magical. My first playgroup with a girl named Claire was what turned me into a play “guru”. From fairy dances to mountain climbing I saw her expand, grow, build new skills, handle novelty and demonstrate intrinsic motivation to activities that before seemed impossible. I saw a nonverbal child learn to communicate through the dance of play. I decided to embrace play fully. Why not? If the boys and girls were laughing, interacting, creating and having fun wasn't this in itself the primary goal?

That's the way it has been at our playhouse since 1997. We are a group of play gurus who also happen to be skilled therapists. We all utilize play as our means to an end. The therapy offers children with a combination of social and sensory difficulties a natural and supportive environment in which to make friends and learn the fine art of play. Laughter and smiles combined with determination and engagement are evidence that each child is participating in a worthwhile experience.

At DPK we provide the place where children can create play worlds together and reach their social and imaginative potential....and have some fun doing it!

Becky is the Director at DPK and has had the opportunity to facilitate more than 6,000 playgroups.



2012

Play becomes a balanced partnership when Sensory Integration and Integrated Play Groups are combined!

Come and join the fun

Visit us at www.developmentalpathways.com

Spotlight on the Staff at DPK

All of the therapists at DPK have expertise in sensory integration as well as other areas you may not know about. Read below for some interesting areas of expertise.....

Diana Smith, MS, CCC-SLP

In 2011 Di chose to expand her practice by getting training in how to incorporate iPad applications into speech sessions to expand communication and learning. We now have an iPad app resource binder at DPK. She is attending **iPAD Innovations for Speech-Language Pathologists & Special Educators** in January 2012.

She also joined Camille, Becky and Jennifer in continuing education training at a course on **Nutrition and Feeding Interventions for Autism and Asperger's**. This course highlights the connection between nutrition and brain function. we all have learned how vitamins and amino acids affect learning and brain development and support children in their health education and emotional well-being.

Tracy Wallace, MS, OTR/L

In 2008 Tracy earned **Certification in Sensory Integration**. This is an internationally recognized certification documenting completion of USC and WPS Comprehensive Program in Sensory Integration. This certification provides in depth training in administering and interpreting the Sensory Integration and Praxis Test (SIPT), as well as specialized training to enhance clinical reasoning skills specifically related to sensory integration and processing issues in children in order to promote age commensurate participation in activities of daily living.

Tracy has also completed the course: Vestibular Habilitation from the Core that provides specialized training in administering **"Astronaut Training: A sound activated vestibular-visual protocol"** This course provide strategies to support children with sensory integration disorder in attaining their optimal physical, emotional social, and cognitive abilities.

Camille Castillo Leach, MS, OTR/L

In 2012 Camille will be presenting at the 32nd Symposium on Intervention for Persons with Special Needs in Bloomington, Minnesota and at the Eisenhower Cooperative in Crestwood, Illinois on School-Based OT.

The two day course is titled **School-Based OT Outside of the Box: More Efficient, More Effective, More Practical & Fun**. She will be presenting with colleagues, Natasha Coetzee Kukuk, OTD, OTR/L and Uyen P. Nguyen, MS, OTR/L.

For more information on this course, please see <http://www.pdpipro.com/SessionH2012.shtml>.

Jennifer Smith, MS, OTR/L

In 2009 Jennifer competed her Level I Certification in **Handwriting Without Tears** and has been providing complimentary handwriting screenings at Redeemer Elementary school to assist in early detection and remediation and to help develop a strong handwriting curriculum to support each child's academic success.

In addition, in 2010 Jennifer became certified by the California Board of Occupational Therapy in the advance practice area of **Swallowing Assessment, Evaluation or Intervention**.

On a personal note, Jennifer gave birth to her daughter Sienna Kline Guppy on May 20 and has been enjoying every moment of motherhood. Jennifer delivered Sienna early at 33 weeks and 6 days due to preeclampsia which has led her on the journey to become the coordinator of the South Baby Preeclampsia walk.



" Throughout the Integrated Play Group process, **PLAY** is recognized as not only a vehicle to learning and development, but as a most meaningful part of childhood that enables children to simply have fun and make friends." - Becky