

# SOUTH SHORE THERAPIES NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019



At long last spring has arrived! Longer days and warmer weather beckon us to get out of the house and enjoy the great outdoors. Research highlights many benefits of playing outside including improved physical health and motor coordination, more developed observation skills and imagination, stronger attention, concentration and reasoning, and higher performance on standardized tests. These are just some of the reasons we are focusing our spring newsletter on decreasing screen time. As the school year comes to an end it affords us more time with our children. Play is the natural bridge to make this time engaging, memorable and fun! Kick a ball, build a fort, or play an old-fashioned game of hide and seek. Enjoy the fresh air and blue skies, while helping to strengthen your child's social, motor and problem-solving skills. As SST celebrates our 15<sup>th</sup> year of working with children we remember to value the incredible strength of play and how it can afford change. Thank you for your confidence in us.

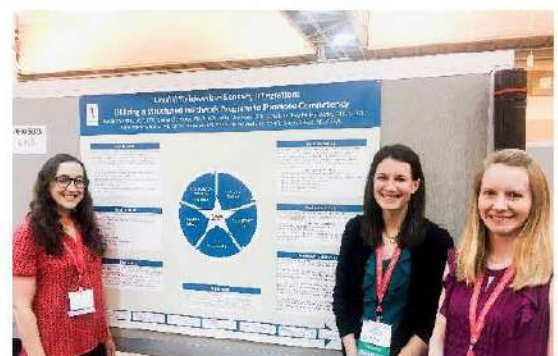


"Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning"

~Mr. Rogers

Summer is fast approaching! If you anticipate a conflict with your SST schedule due to summer activities, or if you're looking to supplement school services over the summer months, please contact our office as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate your request. Also, don't forget to submit a schedule change request if you anticipate needing to shift your schedule for back-to-school.

**SST will be closed on Memorial Day and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday.** Please reschedule your appointment with the front desk!



Our research team recently returned from the 2019 AOTA conference in New Orleans! We enjoyed networking with occupational therapists from around the world and providing four presentations on goal writing in pediatric practice, mentoring in a specialized setting, and the structure of our strong Level II fieldwork program. We are already planning for AOTA 2020 which will be in our hometown Boston!

As part of South Shore Therapies' 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration we all participated in a Spirit week that included crazy hair, crazy hats, mismatched socks, pajama, and super hero days! Our celebration contest was to guess the number of gumballs in the jar. Prizes supported family time and play and included Jenga, 'Spot it' card game and therapy putty with small animals for hide and seek.



See our famous gumball winners below:



**Rainy day keeping you indoors? Make a raindrop sun catcher to hang in your window and work on fine motor skills at the same time!**

Have your child go through their crayons and pick out all the blue ones. This works on visual and sorting skills. Next, have your child peel all the paper off the crayons and sharpen them. Peeling and sharpening are both great ways to work on fine motor skills, such as grasp patterns, dexterity, and strength! Put the crayon shavings onto wax paper and spread them around until the paper is fully covered. Then help your child cut an equal sized piece of wax paper to lay on top. This is a great opportunity to work on scissor skills, which can help with bilateral coordination, as well as hand strength and dexterity. Now it's time for an adult to melt the crayon shavings in the wax paper using the lowest setting on the iron. Let it cool and then have your child draw raindrop shapes on the paper and cut them out if they are able. Use a hole puncher and string to hang them up in your window!

[www.pre-kpages.com/raindrop-suncatchers-fine-motor-art/](http://www.pre-kpages.com/raindrop-suncatchers-fine-motor-art/)

**Question:** At what age can I introduce screen time to my children?

**Answer:** The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages media use except for video-chatting by children younger than 18-24 months. For children ages 2-5, limit screen time to one hour a day of high-quality programming. As your child grows, a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work as well. You'll need to decide how much media to let your child use each day and what types of media are appropriate.

Source: The Mayo Clinic

**Upcoming Overviews**  
**Screen Time**

June 13<sup>th</sup> Norwood/Pembroke via video teleconference presented by Ashleigh Moore 7pm



## Screen Time, What's the Scoop?



## Let's Have Some Fun Playing Together!

Screens are everywhere! Whether it's home, school or even the dentist, a phone, tablet or television is always around. As a result, it has become much more difficult for parents to monitor their children's (and their own 😊) exposure to screens. We've heard that too much screen time is "bad". But why? What effect does the screen have on our brains and therefore, our development, communication and behavior? Research shows that the light emitted from screens mimics sunlight and disrupts our sleep, desynchronizing our body clock. Light, rapidly shifting images, and constant input from screens releases dopamine and triggers the pleasure center of our brain. This makes us feel happy, drawing us back to the screen again and again. Studies have linked over-exposure to screens with language delays, obesity, and aggression due to these neurochemical changes. An adult brain has tools for impulse control, monitoring and planning that can help us regulate our interactions with screens. These skills are not fully developed in children, making their brains more susceptible to the input.

What is most beneficial to a growing brain? Unstructured playtime. Why? Play is more valuable to the developing brain because children are provided endless opportunities to create their own "original content" rather than simply receiving it. To become independent adults, kids need a significant amount of playtime to learn how their bodies fit in space, in addition to developing problem solving and critical thinking skills, all of which comes from play. So, how do we promote quality screen time? Interact WITH your child and the screen. Facetime a relative or sing and dance along to their favorite video. Then re-create the dance or add a part two! For older children, set time limits on screens or develop "screen-free" zones in your home. Want to learn more? Sign up for our Screen Time overview on Thursday June 13th!

So, you managed to cut down on screen time in your house – now what? Here are 35 plus fun alternatives to screens!

- Create an arts and crafts project
- Read a book
- Play your favorite sport
- Play a musical instrument or sing
- Dance to music
- Write jokes and stories
- Create scavenger hunts
- Do a jigsaw puzzle
- Volunteer or do something kind
- Have a picnic
- Draw, color, paint or use sidewalk chalk
- Do chores around the house or yard
- Plant and water flowers
- Visit a playground to swing, slide, etc.
- Take the dog for a walk
- Plan a trip to the zoo
- Ride bikes or scooters
- Play in a sandbox or water table
- Build something with blocks or Legos
- Go bowling or mini golfing
- Look at family pictures and reminisce
- Go to the beach or take a swim
- Play a board or card game
- Build an indoor or outdoor fort
- Take a nature walk or hike
- Play balloon volleyball
- Make an obstacle course
- Cook or bake together
- Play hide & seek or 'red light/green light'"
- Have fun with bubbles

### Staff Profiles – Michelle Miller, Executive Administrative Assistant

#### What is your role on the SST team?

I like to say I wear many hats 😊 I supervise front desk staff - which I must admit is a pleasure considering how wonderful, empathetic and hard-working they all are. In addition, I manage the Pembroke clinic to make sure everything is welcoming and safe for clients and families. I am also the executive administrative assistant to management.

#### What is a fun fact about you?

My motto is work hard play hard! I love working and giving 100%, but when I am not working, I enjoy traveling, checking out local restaurants, and most importantly, spending time with family and friends. I have had the same friends since high school and enjoy monthly girls' nights and yearly girls' getaway trips. I just love everything Boston – sports, events, and traditions.

#### What is the best part about working at SST?

The best part of working at SST would be getting to know the clients and families. I love working with children and knowing we are helping. Whether it's just a smile, answering the telephone and recognizing the voice on the other end, or seeing clients progress, it's all such a fulfilling experience. Even though we are growing and expanding, the company still maintains that 'small' company feel. It's not often you can say you work with such amazing people who support you both professionally and personally. SST continuously hosts social events that are so much fun!



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We would love ❤️ to hear feedback for additional resources, information, and advice parents and professionals would like to hear. We want to focus the newsletter toward the information you want to receive!

Contact [sstudley@southshoretherapies.com](mailto:ssstudley@southshoretherapies.com) with recommendations