



M E G H A N
B U T L E R
Occupational Therapist



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2021 - Let's go!

About Meghan Butler OT

What exactly does an OT do?

Identifying red flags in development

An article on eye movements

About...

Meghan Butler OT is a brand new Occupational Therapy practice based in Melkbos. The practice specializes in paediatric (kids) Occupational Therapy with services rendered to children between the ages of 0 and 10 years.

The OT behind Meghan Butler OT is a passionate and creative individual. She completed her studies at the University of the Free State along with a Masters Degree at WITS. She enjoys creative problem solving in therapy and finds immense joy in seeing children reach their full potential.





What exactly does an Occupational Therapist do?

Occupational Therapy is aimed at enabling and promoting individuals to participate in activities of everyday life as best they can.

This is done by method of meaningful and purposeful activities and engagement in daily 'occupations' to enable those with limitations or impairments to achieve their full potential.

In the paediatric setting, Occupational Therapists assist children in developing skills that are necessary for optimal functioning in their areas of occupation, being self care, play and school.

The process starts off with a standardized evaluation that assists the therapist in the identifying delays and limitations that hinder a child from reaching his/her full potential in the areas mentioned above.

Once the delays and limitation have been identified, goal directed, client centred therapy can commence that ultimately enables children to achieve their maximum potential.



Quote of the day

BY MARIA MONTESSORI

Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.

Through respecting your little one, you teach them to respect others.



Identifying THE RED FLAGS in child development

A child develops as he/she gets older! Certain skills are needed in order for adequate concentration and school related skills to develop. This checklist was compiled to assist you with the spotting of red flags in development in order to help you help your little one reach their full potential.

GROSS MOTOR INDICATORS

- Struggles to maintain a good sitting/ standing posture.
- Struggles to sit still.
- Struggles with ball skills.
- Does not know own body (where what is and man drawing).
- Afraid of heights.
- Struggles with activities that require balance.
- Shifts/turns body/page when working at table.
- W or M sits on carpet/floor.
- Struggles to master galloping and skipping.
- Struggles to balance or hop on one leg.
- Falls regularly and gets hurt often.

FINE MOTOR INDICATORS

- Poor pencil grip and use of utensils.
- Hand tires easily during colouring/ writing.
- Swops hands.
- Poor quality when writing/colouring/cutting.
- Struggles to tie shoelaces/zips/ buttons etc.
- Struggles to copy figures/pictures/ from board.

SENSORY INDICATORS

OVER SENSITIVE/AVOID BEHAVIOUR:

- Dislikes physical contact, hugs and kisses.
- Has a big personal space.
- Dislikes textures/some materials (sand/dough/clothing tags).
- Dislikes getting dirty.
- Dislikes walking barefoot.
- Avoids swings/slides/jungle gym.
- Gets carsick.
- Poor sleeping pattern and fussy eater.
- Dislikes getting dressed/bathing time/brushing teeth and combing hair.

UNDER SENSITIVITY:

- Prefers passive activities.
- Unaware/less aware of touch and temperatures (does not get cold easily).
- Unaware/less aware of sounds (seems as if he/she is not listening).
- Unaware/less aware of own body in space (would bump into things/people regularly).
- Unaware/less aware of pain (does not get hurt/perceive pain easily).

SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

- Spins/swings/tumbles and turns/sways (in attempt to seek movement).
- Climbs/jumps impulsively.
- Feels/ touches/chews everything.
- Very little to no personal space.
- Sings/makes noises.
- Impulsive and often perceived as naughty.

PERCEPTUAL INDICATORS

- Unsure of shapes/colours/sizes/ numbers/ bodyparts.
- Inefficient knowledge regarding terms like up, down, in front, behind etc.
- Can't discriminate between left and right.
- Draws pictures/numbers /letters in reverse or upside down.
- Struggles to build a puzzle.
- Struggles to identify small differences.
- Struggles to complete a pattern.
- Struggles to construct (games like pegboard and tangram).
- Struggles to write within the lines..

WORK SKILLS AND OTHER INDICATORS:

- Needs constant reminding and support to complete tasks.
- Slow work speed.
- Takes long to get going and does not complete tasks.
- Low self-esteem
- Anxious
- Inadequate focus and concentration.
- Behavioural problems.
- Low motivation.
- Still wets bed.





Eye movements

Eyes are crucial and our window to the outside world. Despite this, problems relating to eye development and movements are often overlooked and miss-labeled as ADHD and learning deficits. Along with this, parents are usually unaware of the ripple effect that poor eye movements can have on various other child-development factors.

In this article we will briefly highlight some of the more common eye movements and their importance as well as the most regularly encountered cases of eye development problems.

There are four types of eye movements OT's look at - tracking (the ability to maintain visual contact with a target), quick localization, convergence and crossing the midline (moving eyes from one's left side to one's right side smoothly).

Deficits in these areas appear when for example, a child is not able to keep visual contact with a moving target. To compensate, they move their heads or alternatively their eyes jump from one place to another while trying to keep contact. A child may also have difficulty when crossing his/her midline with the eyes and will lose contact. Another common problem seen is small, jerk-like, involuntary eye movements called Nystagmus.

Furthermore, children are sometimes not able to localize their eyes quickly from one place to another, or they lose focus when an object is moved closer or further from their face.

All of the above mentioned problems may have a negative impact on school work and other skills like reading; copying from the black board; tracking moving objects; visual memory; writing; attention and concentration.

In order to understanding the visual skills required on school level, we need to think about the classroom environment. A child sits at a desk, writes, alternately reads from a textbook and from the chalkboard, and usually follows the teacher's movements around the room while listening to the lesson.

Children who have eye teaming, tracking and focusing deficiencies often have complaints of dizziness, nausea, headaches, and/or red, burning and itchy eyes. These symptoms often occur after the child is required to maintain visual concentration. For example, doing a reading lesson or writing from the black board is enough to stress a child's visual system when it is deficient in any of the above skills and may cause fatigue, restlessness and difficulty paying attention.

Eye movement difficulties may also cause visual perceptual-; gross-and fine motor coordination; eye-hand coordination; balance; gravitational security; and many more problems that are much needed and important in your child's development.

"Looking" at the facts, the importance of eye movements can't be stressed enough, even though it might seem like something small and insignificant.



MEGHAN BUTLER

Occupational Therapist

What to look forward to in our next issue...

Sensory system

The bucket analogy

How can your OT help?

Terminology

OT Terms!

Muscle Tone...

Muscle tone is the amount of tension in a muscle at rest which determines the resistance of the muscle against passive movement.

Muscle tone influences:

- postural stability,
- postural control and endurance.

A child with low muscle tone has to put in a lot more effort in order for his/her muscles to keep tension.

This child tends to support his head with his hand during table activities, tends to press hard on his pencil, takes long to complete tasks, gets tired quickly and loses concentration. They tend to be fidgety in an attempt to accommodate their muscle tone and therefore has an inability to maintain a good sitting posture.

Midline crossing...

Midline crossing is the ability to cross into the opposite side of your body over a vertical midline which divides the body into a left and right side.

Anti-gravity postures...

This is the ability to assume and maintain the prone extension and supine flexion postures against gravity. The core muscles as well as neck muscles play a major role in maintaining these positions. The ability to maintain anti-gravity postures is important for postural stability and endurance during the maintenance of a good sitting posture during table activities such as writing, cutting, colouring etc. This often has a negative effect on a child's work tempo, concentration and neatness of work.