

Newsletter Date

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Miracles in Communication

(201) 837-6060

Joanne Hinchman-Giuffre, M.A. CCC-SLP, Director

Why relationship-based therapy?

- * Because it's fun
- * Because kids are happy and excited to come to therapy
- * Because living in a community is all about relationships

The heart of our therapy is to enable children to develop relationships with others through communication. This process usually begins with the family and moves to the outside world. We all know the ups and downs of relationships and will work hard to maintain friendships, marriages and harmony between children, siblings and their parents. We sometimes take relationships for granted. After more than thirty years of practice as a speech and language pathologist I realize that developing a relationship is integral to helping a client accomplish their goals. I use the natural environment to build skills needed for communication knowing the ultimate goal is interactive communication. I listen and observe before I decide what to say or do. Through the many years of therapy I have been able to forge many relationships with clients and their families.

When a person knows that you are with them and will listen to them, they begin to trust you. From that point, they are more likely to take risks, make compromises, and be present with you. In a therapeutic relationship trust is mandatory since we ask children to do difficult tasks such as making new sounds, trying a new word and allowing us to touch their faces to support their speech. Children with apraxia or dyspraxia have difficulty with speech production on demand. In relationship-based therapy, there is give and take, and the child has numerous opportunities to initiate oral language



which is easier for them. Instead of repeating what we want to hear, we are looking for what the child wants to say. Therapy begins where the child or adult is, and moves to new levels of functioning. To learn where someone is 'coming from' you must be with them physically and emotionally.

Prompting someone can be compared to dancing. When both partners are emotionally involved with each other and the music, they guide each other through the movements of the dance in a give-and-take fashion. Oral language is like music with its own melody and rhythm pattern, and when you are prompting you must be cognizant of the person's inner rhythm, as well as their ability to use their muscles. The therapist can learn from the tactile/kinesthetic/sensory input, since there is feedback from the muscle movements of the client. The therapist learns how far the muscles can move, which direction of movement is easier or harder for the client and how tense or relaxed the musculature is. Feedback goes both ways: from the therapist to the client and the client to the therapist, who can feel the movement of the muscles in their fingers as they are prompting. However, without the relationship, there would be no dance.

I would love to hear questions or feedback from you regarding this article, since our learning from each other will also be a reciprocal process.

Refer a Friend

If you or a friend know of someone that could benefit from our specialized therapies, please don't hesitate to have them call.

As always it is a pleasure and an honor to serve you, from all of us here at Miracles!

www.miraclesincommunication.com

Contact us:

Miracles in
Communication
1029 Teaneck Road
Teaneck, NJ 07666

(201) 837-6060
miracomm@optonline.net