



LEAGUESCHOOL OF GREATER BOSTON

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE CHILD WITH AUTISM

Look Inside!!

- Tips from the OT Gym - Visual Perception
- Nurse's Corner
- Featured Staff— Shannon Paiva
- Speech-Language Department Tips - Mealtime Routines



EVENTS CALENDAR:

Special Reminder:
SNOW DAYS MAKEUP
Dismissal at Noon:
May 22nd
June 26th & June 29th
June 30th - last day of school.

Music Room News!
The League School Chorus will be performing at the Ellis Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Sharon on June 15th! The Chorus will perform patriotic songs.

League School Family Newsletter

Spring '09

Note from the Director of Education

Dear League School Community,

I hope you are all as excited as I am that Spring is finally here! We are all looking forward to spending more time on the playground and walking on our trail now that the cold weather is gone.

For those of you I have not met, I would like to introduce myself. I am the new Director of Education here at League. I have held a variety of roles in the eight years I have worked here, including Head Teacher, Director of Admissions, and Assistant Director of Education. I am very passionate about educating children with autism and am looking forward to working with our community to help our students reach their greatest potential. Please be in touch if there is anything I can do for you.

All the best,

Kelly Cavanaugh, M.Ed.

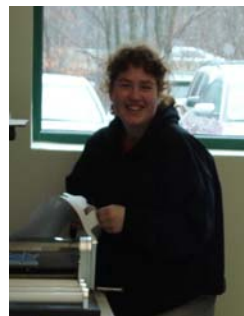


Room 311 said goodbye to one of their classmates last month. Dan had been a student at League for 14 years – he has moved on to an adult program.

Dan's fun personality will be missed by the staff and students here at League.

New This Spring—Featured Student!

Sarah Knoll has been a student at League School since July 2003. In her time here, she has made wonderful progress in her studies and in becoming a healthier person. She contributes not only a beautiful smile and positive attitude to League School, but she is also an important part of our vocational program.



**Great Job,
Sarah!!**

Sarah completes office work for a number of specialists throughout the building and also spends time in the Foundations program working with our younger students. Sarah recently started working at CVS and is already one of their best employees. League School is very proud of Sarah and her accomplishments.



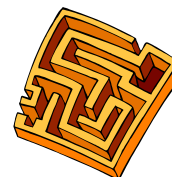
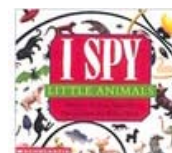
TIPS FROM THE OT GYM: VISUAL PERCEPTION

Many of our students have difficulty with activities that we do automatically and without thinking about what or how we are doing them. This month, we're addressing those difficulties surrounding **visual perception**. For many students in our school, forming letters and placing them on a line is very hard. Other students have trouble locating scissors in a basket of other school tools. Some students have trouble isolating a math problem on a page full of problems & equations. Still other students do not recognize the letter *R* when it is presented in an unfamiliar font.

Visual perception relates to information received by the brain from the eyes. Specifically, it is the interpretation and application by the brain of what we see. Visual perception can be broken down in many ways but incorporates such skills as visual memory, discrimination of like or different objects, locating items in a distracting or camouflaging background, or noticing objects' relationships to each other in space. Visual perception is crucial to children learning from visual information. It is also very important to many of our students who communicate through use of visual pictures.

Below are some suggestions for strengthening visual perceptual skills in fun and motivating ways.

- Hidden pictures including *I Spy* and *Where's Waldo*
- Word searches
- Crossword puzzles
- Pattern copying activities including geoboards, pegboards and tangrams
- Jigsaw puzzles
- *Perfection*
- *Etch-A-Sketch®*
- Create from a model with *Legos®* or *K'NEX*
- Marble Maze
- Memory games
- Color by number

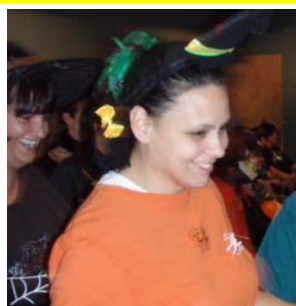


SEE YOU NEXT TIME FROM THE OT GYM!

MEET SHANNON PAIVA - TRANSITION HEAD TEACHER

This Spring we would like to honor Shannon Paiva M.Ed., a Head Teacher in the Transition program. Shannon has been a Head Teacher at League since July 2005. She has not only done wonderful work in the day program, but has also contributed to programming in the residential program. Shannon is one of our go-to teachers for MCAS Portfolio help. As a veteran of portfolio development, she runs sessions after school to collaborate with other teachers and is always available to give assistance.

Shannon is a caring, passionate teacher who instills in her students the motivation to be the best they can be, and it truly shows in the work they do throughout the school. League School is very fortunate to have Shannon in our community.



Shannon
enjoying
Halloween!

In her classroom, Shannon has the energy to match the students she teaches!





Tips from the Speech/Language Department

Supporting Language Development in a Mealtime Routine

Routines are a great time to support and expand language development. Once an activity has become a routine, children know what is expected; this may allow them to focus more on the language surrounding these activities. Below are some suggestions to expand language around a mealtime routine.

Before:

Create a job board for setting the table

Have one person be in charge of putting out plates, one in charge of cups, etc.

Corey - puts plates on table
Mom - puts food on table

Use simple language to narrate your child's actions "Put cups next to plates," or "Put plates on placemats."

Have your child gather ingredients while you are cooking by telling them 1-2 items at a time or creating a checklist for them. For older students, you could give them clues about what you need, rather than telling them the name of the item.

For example if you needed milk you could say, "I need something from the refrigerator. It's in a carton. You can pour it."

During:

Manipulate the environment to encourage requesting

- Fill the glass with only two sips of milk; keep the milk container on the table, but out of reach. Encourage your child to request, "I want milk," or "More milk," using his/her means of communication
- Purposely forget to give your child an item (i.e., no fork, a plate without food, a cup without liquid, etc.)
- Use simple commands to include your child "Give me ketchup." It might be helpful to have siblings model the action first or take turns giving an item to one another. For example, "Give juice to mommy," then point to the child and say, "Your turn."



- Encourage choice making throughout dinner. For example, ask your child if he/she wants *lemonade or milk, ketchup or mustard, more or all-done, pudding or pretzels.*

Have your child offer food to others

Give the child a dish and have him/her offer it to others, saying "Do you want some, _____?"

This is also a great place to incorporate vocabulary related to quantity. Ask your child, "Would you like a lot or a little?" "Would you like a few or a couple?" or "How much would you like?"



Encourage commenting and conversation

- Make statements about what you or another family member is eating. For example, point to self and say, "I am eating pizza! It's so good!"
- Take turns going around the table and labeling actions (i.e., "eating (food)," "drinking (liquid)," "cutting (meat)," "pouring (liquid)," etc.)
- Ask older children about their day. It may help to ask specific questions. Rather than "How was your day?" ask, "What was your favorite class today?" "What did you do at recess?" or "Who did you eat lunch with?"

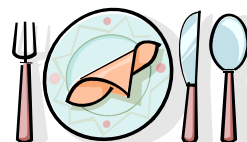
After:

Include cleaning up in the routine

You can incorporate a job board here as well.

Corey - puts plates in sink
Mom - puts leftovers in fridge

This is another great time to incorporate quantity concepts ("Get all of the cups," "Put a couple of plates in the dishwasher"). Quality concepts can also be incorporated ("These forks are dirty!" "Let's put the clean plates back in the cupboard.")



THE NURSE'S CORNER



Spring allergy season soon will bring sneezing

Spring allergy season hit the East Coast hard last year. With the amount of pollen floating in the air four times greater than what observers consider to be high, East Coast allergy sufferers were left wondering what hit them.

Whether pollen counts will be high again this year or settle back into what is considered to be a normal range remains to be seen. Seasonally, and daily, weather conditions impact pollen counts, making it difficult to predict pollen counts more than a few days in advance. On windy days, or for days after high winds, pollen counts are high because the pollen has been spread throughout the air. After it rains, counts drop as the rain washes the pollen away.

Pollen is measured in grains per cubic meter. For trees, 1,500 grains per cubic meter is considered very high. Last spring, areas of the East Coast measured 6,000 grains per cubic meter. Though high pollen counts can affect numerous types of allergies, from eye allergies (conjunctivitis) to skin reactions (dermatitis), the most common spring allergy is allergic rhinitis.

Frequently called hay fever, seasonal allergic rhinitis affects 35 million people in the United States. It is triggered by "allergens," substances that initiate an allergic response, such as pollens or molds.

When people who have allergic rhinitis inhale these allergens, they combine with an allergic antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). Normally present at very low levels in the body, IgE is found in larger quantities in people who have allergies.

When the allergen and the IgE combine in the lining of the nose or eyes, the result is the release of chemicals, including histamine. These chemicals cause the allergic symptoms of sneezing, itching, watery eyes, nasal congestion or headaches as the body tries to fight off the foreign allergen.

Allergies, particularly in the spring, have a huge impact across the country. Fortunately, medical treatment is usually very effective.

Allergic disease can manifest itself in many different forms, including:

Allergic Rhinitis

Commonly called "hay fever," allergic rhinitis is an irritation of the nose where the inside of the nose becomes inflamed after being exposed to an allergic trigger. It often is associated with asthma and sinusitis. Common symptoms are:

- Watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Runny nose



- Runny nose
- Itchy eyes and nose
- Children who have allergic rhinitis may have dark circles under their eyes
- Children may use the palm of their hand to push the nose up in an attempt to relieve itching (which is known as the "allergic salute.")

Sinusitis

Pain in the forehead, teeth or face, coughing and dark yellow or green nasal discharge are the main symptoms of sinusitis. With allergic sinusitis, itchy eyes and sneezing may also occur. Sinusitis usually happens with rhinitis, and more than 50% of moderate to severe asthmatics have chronic sinusitis.

Because both asthma and allergic rhinitis are diseases that affect the airways, controlling rhinitis will help control symptoms in people who also have asthma.

Asthma

Asthma is an ongoing disease that inflames the airways, making it difficult to breathe. It can be tricky to diagnose because it often is mistaken for other respiratory disorders, such as bronchitis or pneumonia.

Up to 80% of children with asthma develop symptoms before the age of five. A child's physician must rely heavily on the parents' observations to determine the signs of asthma and make a proper diagnosis.

Key symptoms of asthma are:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness
- Young children may complain that their chests "hurt" or "feel funny," or they may slow down when playing and become easily irritated.



Asthma also may be triggered by a family history of allergy and the child's exposure to allergens - any substance that can trigger an allergy. Common allergens are dust mites, cockroach droppings, animal dander (dead skin flakes and saliva), pollens and molds.