



Student Support Department

Message from the Head of Primary Student Support

MELANIE NICHOLE LEMONA: HEAD OF PRIMARY STUDENT SUPPORT

Welcome to the Student Support Department Newsletter section. I hope you find our additional to this wonderful resource informative. I realize that supporting your child is a tremendous responsibility and I will do my best to ensure that each student has a safe and motivating learning experience in this upcoming year.

Here at ICS we offer parents and students a unique and successful learning environment of inclusion. ICS is successful at including students with special educational needs and helping them meet those needs in a positive and proactive way. For the professionals at ICS, it is far more than just about the location of a child's school placement. Inclusion is about instilling a sense of community and belonging for all students with or without special educational needs. The approach at ICS is flexible and adapted to meet individual needs within the overall curriculum framework, allowing us to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and differences. We utilize a multi-disciplinary team approach in order to offer the best opportunity for children to be successful while remediating learning difficulties. Specialized therapies and other services are provided to the students once the multidisciplinary team decides which ones are most suited for the student's strengths and needs. These therapies are provided to maximize the student's learning potential, educational success and social competence.

It is pivotal to our department in having you help us to achieve our goals. We are constantly seeking to improve and expand our support services to you, so we welcome ideas from you for further improvement. I hope that you find the edition from our department useful, informative and pleasurable reading.

You may remember from my Welcome Letter at the beginning of the year we were very excited to include new programs to our list of services to support our families. I am happy to share that they have all been put in place successfully, and your feedback has been very rewarding for the team.

Here is a brief update:

PTO led by Nicky McCarthy and Melissa Janssen. The PTO has already had a great influence in our classrooms, as well as, offered a supportive network for our families.

Parent Information Workshop (1 x per term). The first successful workshop was delivered on October 5th, 2011. The workshop was designed specifically for parents who are caring for children who have special needs. It addressed the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual components of the journey that the parents face. An environment was created where parents could comfortably identify and work through the challenges they encounter daily.

SEN after school sport club led by Jessica Ward supported by Stavroulla Vasileidi. The club is open to the ICS community with a specific focus on our SEN students to help them express themselves through sport and recreation by offering professional coaching in sport opportunities, at all levels. Our aim is to help them discover the pleasures of being involved in sport, from the enjoyment of learning new skills, to ongoing social involvement and friendship. We also aim to work to develop or strengthen their physical needs in a fun and interactive way. The club reached its full capacity very quickly and, therefore, we have decided to continue with this club in the following term.

Social skills Group led by Philippa Da Silva, Speech and Language Therapist and Supported by Mira Randelovic, Learning Support Assistant/Speech and Language Therapy Trained to commence at the beginning of next term. Child Parent Relationship Therapy (Filial Therapy Model) is a specialized workshop of 10 sessions designed to improve parent/child relationships. It is to provide parents/carers with basic play therapy skills to use at home.

Continued on next page >

Child Parent Relationship Therapy (Filial Therapy Model) is a specialized workshop of 10 sessions designed to improve parent/child relationships. It is to provide parents/carers with basic play therapy skills to use at home.

The PYSE Team is very excited about the introduction of Experiential/Outdoor learning lessons! They have been out at least once a week and students have been applying skills learned in the classroom in these trips. They have also started exploring their community! They have had short trips to Baker Street tube station, to the post office, to a supermarket in Marylebone High Street, to Rymans and to Regent's Park. In these trips students are responsible for planning their journeys using maps and they are encouraged to use money to pay for purchases. It is a great opportunity to develop life skills in a fun and creative way.

October 14th, 2011, Friday PYSE will be visiting the Transport Museum to learn about different forms of transportation from the past and today.

Last month PYSE took the tube to visit the Science Museum. Students enjoyed exploring the different tube lines. They visited the exhibition "Who Am I?" to learn more about themselves. We highly recommended this exhibition. More information on: http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/galleries/who_am_i.aspx

NEWS UPDATE

OCTOBER

PARENT INFORMATION WORKSHOP - Thank you to all parents who participated and shared their emotional journey through this workshop.

IILP MEETINGS - Invitations have been shared to invite you for the IILP meeting for our old and new students who have an existing IILP in place. This entails meeting with our multidisciplinary team to discuss targets and areas of need. IILP's are part of a specialist service for our students who require this additional support. This service does not apply to all of the students of our department.

NOVEMBER

November 8, 9, 10th Autism Accreditation Inspection

Social Skills Group will commence. Dates to be confirmed.

Sport Club will continue to run through the next term.

Filial Therapy Model will commence next term. Details to be shared at a later date.

2

RESOURCES

The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun and Raising an In-Sync Child, by Carol Kranowitz, both have lots of good ideas for outdoor play that strengthens children's sensory processing abilities. Look through and find the ones that best address your child's particular strengths and weaknesses -- or just the ones that look manageable to you. Just as you got advice from therapists for good activities, share with those therapists which of these activities were most fun and effective with your youngster. Good ideas go both ways.

Science Museum

Fun outdoor activity to spend with your children on a day out. For more information: http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/galleries/who_am_i.aspx



Student Support Team and Consultants



Alan Andrew
Director of Student Support



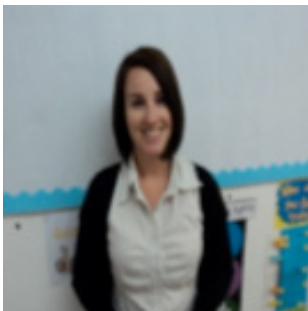
Melanie Nichole Lemona
Head of Primary Student Support



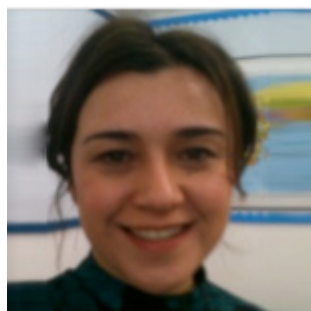
Tereza Nogueira
Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist



Philipa Da Silva
Speech and Language Therapist



Roxanne Moorley
Literacy Support Specialist



Adriana Buzetto
Child Psychotherapist



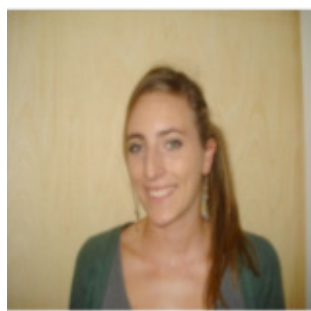
Antonita Antoniou
Lead LSA



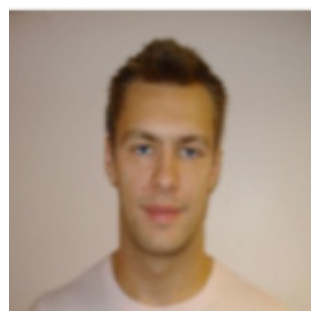
Luis Alvelais
LSA



Jennifer Trooien
LSA



Jessica Ward
LSA

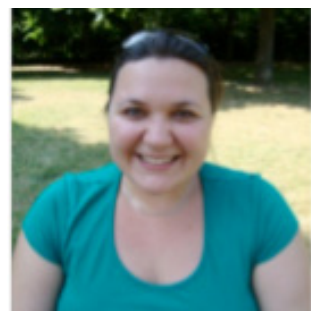


Dimitriy Drannikov
LSA

Primary Years Special Education Class



Renato Marques
PYSE Teacher



Tunde Bodor
PYSE Teacher



Livia De Marco
LSA



Jennifer Trooien
LSA



LSA Focus

Message from the Luis Alvelais

LUIS ALVELAIS: LSA

Dear Friends,

With each edition of the ICS newsletter the student support department would like to celebrate each segment with one member of our team who works compassionately with our students, and your children every day.

This month we celebrate Mr. Luis who has been a long serving employee of ICS for 6 years embracing with excellence our school ethos, as well as, our students with special educational needs. Luis has a wonderful, patient and creative manner for working with our students. His proactive and 'hands on' approach to working with our students, as well as, the team makes him an invaluable resource to the team.

Luis' professional skills and experience, has allowed greater independent learning for our students.

Thank you, Luis

Super Hero!

Another Super Hero focus we would like to salute some of the special people that help keep our students stay safe and happy throughout the year. This month we would like to celebrate Dexter John, who has been working with ICS for 12 years. He has a patient and sensitive manner with our students, and has always demonstrated great compassion and humour. His bubbly and warm personality makes him loved by many of our children. The students feel safe and happy to leave at the end of the day and for this we are grateful. Thank you, Dexter



AUTISM ACCREDITATION

We are very proud of our inclusive practises and the fact that we are probably the most inclusive international school in London, and one of the few inclusive international schools worldwide. However, we know that we must continue to seek ways of developing our learning support provision in order to best serve our students with learning differences. One of the ways we are looking to do this is by going through an accreditation process with the National Autistic Society (NAS).

We have been working closely with the NAS in preparation for our accreditation visit which will take place from 8-10th of November 2011. The Autism Accreditation was established by the National Autistic Society in 1993. It has achieved international recognition as a measure of high quality provision for people on the autism spectrum. It is also a development tool aimed at helping services recognise where their strengths lie, and where they might improve. The criteria that the inspectors will be looking at are a specialised knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorders which consistently:

- **Informs the organisation and management of the school.**
- **Informs the individual assessment and planning for all pupils with autism**
- **Results in positive outcomes for all pupils with autism**

The sources that they will use in the evaluation process will be discussions and interviews, classroom observations, written records (IEPs; Behaviour Plans etc.), and Family Questionnaires. Once completed a panel will meet to come to a decision. We will share this feedback with you once we have been informed.



Playing with your child

BY MELANIE PAPPAS-LEMONA

Indoor Play

Finding the time to play with your child can be tricky, when you're also under pressure to do therapy and strengthen learning skills and bolster development. Try one of these eight play opportunities that do double duty, helping you both have fun and do good.

Floortime

Floortime is a therapeutic approach that involves getting down on the floor with your child and following his/her lead as you play together. The hidden agenda is to engage children and help them advance through developmental milestones, but to your youngster, it will just feel like play. To you, too, if you're doing it right. Check the following resources for information on the how and why of this fun approach:

- **Book Review: The Child With Special Needs**
- **Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders**
- **Floortime Versus Applied Verbal Behaviour**

Brain Gym

Brain Gym is a system of exercises and activities that get the brain and body working together to improve learning, memory, and thinking skills. It's also fun to do, and as silly as you want to make it. With the guides available from the Brain Gym site, you can learn how to do the exercises with your child and what they may help you accomplish. Try a play session before homework time to wake up your brains. These resources can help you get started:

- **Brain Gym International**
- **Brain Gym Video Demonstration**
- **Brain Gym Exercises**

Deep Pressure Play

If your child always seems to want to wrestle or push or pull or slam or drop, playing games that incorporate those activities with some deep pressure and massage may be a rewarding and calming experience. Wrapping up in blankets, pushing the boundaries of Body Sox, crawling through tunnels of pillows, splashing in a ball pit, having a tug of war, bouncing off the soft sides of a blow-up trampoline all can be fun ways to play, as well as, good therapy for input-craving sensory systems. For inspiration and equipment, read:

- **Make Your Child Into a Burrito**
- **Five Ways to Have Fun With Body Sox**
- **Sensory Integration Tools and Toys**

Speech Play

Chances are you've played goofy word games with your child, or sung some silly songs. Most word-related play involves rhyming, repetition, memory, word retrieval, tempo, volume, and fluency in ways so fun and distracting that kids don't even know they're working. For more ideas, read:

- **Five Familiar Games for Sneaky Speech Therapy**
- **Take a Look at Your Child's Learning Environment**
- **Game Review: A Fist Full of Coins**

Continued on next page >

Number Play

Doing a big old page of Maths problems may not sound very playful to your kids, but try a board game or a dice game, or challenge them to figure out the age of a favourite actor or count the number of pennies in a jar, and suddenly numbers look far more friendly. Work Maths into your playtime routine and get a learning workout for your time, too. These articles help you add it up:

- **Games for Fun and Learning**
- **“Birthday Math” Gets Kids to Go Figure**
- **Dice Game Makes Math Facts Fun**

Make a Mess

It may seem odd to be helping your child make a mess, but messy play can help children with sensory integration and occupational therapy goals, and the silliness of doing it with Mum or Dad only makes it more fun. Plunging hands into a bin full of rice with toys hidden inside, or sculpting with shaving cream, or drawing letters in pudding are all sloppy ways to strengthen skills. For some ideas on creative mess-making, read:

- **Book Review: The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun**
- **Make a Rice Tub**
- **Inspire Reluctant Artists**

Use Your Imagination

In the end, you're the one who's likely to have the best ideas for productive play with your particular child. You know better than anyone else what your child needs, and the kind of activities he/she responds to. Give yourself an opportunity to spend that time, whether it's a half-hour at the playground or a play-dough session at the kitchen table or a pillow-fight before bed. Having fun with you is important to your child, no matter what you do, and here's a little secret: It's important for you, too.

Outdoor Play

Playing outside is one of those rites of childhood that gets championed by people who feel kids today spend too much time in front of a screen. Fresh air, exercise, creative activity -- that's all great, sure, but for those who have children with special needs, outdoor play can be problematic. Medical issues and physical disabilities can make the great outdoors inhospitable and unaccommodating for some youngsters. And even if your child can theoretically interact with the environment without risk, developmental and behavioural issues can lead your child to find dangerous circumstances in even the most benign playground settings.

For many children with special needs, free outdoor play must give way to tightly supervised and structured activities, and that puts a big burden on Mum and Dad to come up with ideas for fun ways to get young bodies and imaginations moving. If responsibility for playtime falls on your tired shoulders, try these five ways to get some outdoor time for your child.

Continued on next page >

1. Take a Walk

It's the simplest of outdoor activities, but it provides the structure and supervision that your child may need, while getting both of you out and moving. Pick a path through your neighbourhood that's appropriate for your child's abilities, or find a park that has a good walking trail and try that. Make the walk less about cardiovascular fitness than letting your child interact with the outdoors. He or she may walk more slowly than you'd like, get more distracted, complain about tiredness sooner. Tailor your walking routine to your child's abilities and interests, and do make it a routine, same time every day if you can.



2. Do a Park Tour

Does your town or area have a number of different parks? Make it a project to visit all of them. If you can, pick a time when they're less likely to be full of swing- and slide-hogging kids. Try out the different playgrounds and brainstorm with your child what he or she enjoys or doesn't. You may find a good place to make your regular playground stop, or gain a greater awareness of your child's sensory issues and play preferences. This is a particularly good project to take on over the summer or on a school break.



3. Check Your IILP

If your child gets physical or occupational therapy, chances are there's a list of things that the therapist is working on with your child. Are they working on ball throwing? Ball catching? Walking on a narrow balance beam, similar to the outer lip of the sidewalk? Pushing a big therapy ball? Crawling through a tunnel? Rolling? Swinging? Jumping? Talk with your child's therapists to find out what techniques they're using to strengthen these skills, and then make them part of your outdoor play repertoire. You'll be reinforcing the work done in therapy while doing something that looks like fun.



4. Make a Mess

Have you been reluctant to try things like filling a bin with rice and letting your child dig in; topping a surface with shaving cream and letting your child smear it around; squirting some finger-paint on a piece of paper and letting your child create something crazy? Outdoors is a great place to do those messy goopy activities, and hose both child and surfaces down afterward. Your child might also enjoy colouring on the sidewalk with big fat pieces of chalk, digging in dirt and mud, creating with paper mache, or finding bits of rock and leaf and flower to glue to a piece of paper for a special art project. This is what the outdoors is for.

