



News

from the
Kazakh Ergotherapy Association

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Word from the interim-president

Gerdine Lok

As we have entered into a new year, I'd like to wish all of you a wonderful 2017. We as the Kazakhstan Ergotherapy Association (KEA) dream and hope to continue to develop Occupational Therapy (OT) in this beautiful country.

Over the years we have built up many valuable relationships with professionals in the local medical system, as well as with officials within the health care departments in different cities in Kazakhstan. It is still a challenge to work as OT's alongside professionals who are trained in such a different way, but we believe OT is a great way to help people to achieve goals in their lives that are significant for their quality of life, despite the disabilities and challenges they face!

KEA has big dreams, with the ultimate dream of establishing an OT degree in country to train local OT's to become professional therapists. We aren't there yet, but hopefully in the coming year we will get one step closer to fulfilling this dream. We would also like to develop KEA certified resources that we as OT's can use in country, e.g. standardized observation- and assessment forms. Regular meetings with KEA (associate) members are helping all of us to develop our own skills in working as an OT.

Please do be in touch with us if you have any questions, ideas or dreams or if you would like to work together with us. We would love to hear from you!

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a **client-centred health profession** concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to **participate in the activities of everyday life**. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with **people and communities** to enhance their ability to **engage in the occupations** they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by **modifying the occupation or the environment** to better support their occupational engagement (*WFOT, 2012*).

Introduction

Gerdine Lok

Last year we said goodbye to our president, Evelien Visser, and her family. I'm honored to continue the journey of KEA in Kazakhstan, and would like to introduce myself.

My name is Gerdine Lok, and I came to Kazakhstan in 2011, after having worked as an OT for two years in Mongolia. Originally I'm from the Netherlands where I graduated in 2006 as an OT.

One of the things I love about being an OT is how I have the privilege to journey with someone (*and the people around them!*) in so many ways. Many times, I've seen that an important part of my role as an OT is helping people to discover those things that are important to them. Doing exercises, thinking of different activities, helping to find special equipment, or simply listening to a mother who's struggling with her child with Cerebral Palsy: it's all OT and I'm loving it.



Occupational Therapy at school

Linda Beadle - Occupational Therapist in Almaty

Trampoline, scooter boards, parachutes, tunnels, bouncing balls, cut out puzzles, chopsticks ... these are some of the fun tools and equipment which we use to enrich the gross motor, fine motor and visual perceptual skills of the kindergarten and grade one students at an international school in Almaty. The best way to get a child to sit still and sit up straight at their desks to do their work is to get them moving - jumping, rolling, crawling! The little muscles in a child's hands and fingers often need to be strengthened so that they can hold a pencil correctly for good penmanship. Visual perceptual skills like being able to do a puzzle or recognize the direction or sequence of objects are all essential to reading and writing.

While these classes may look like a bunch of kids just having fun there is a plan and purpose behind each activity which is hopefully helping each child to enrich their gross and fine motor and visual perceptual skills when they are young and to help give them a good foundation for the rest of their school careers.



Experience from an Occupational Therapist in Kazakhstan

Bouwine van Eeden Petersman – Occupational Therapist in Almaty

When I visited Kazakhstan in 2013 for the first time, I visited children who had disabilities. I saw children with Cerebral Palsy (CP) who couldn't get the care that they needed. My passion for these children grew and in 2015 I moved to Kazakhstan to work as an Occupational Therapist (OT). Although working in a country such as Kazakhstan is very different than it is in the Netherlands, the goal of enabling people to participate in the activities of everyday life remains the same. Children with disabilities are often not part of society, so as an OT I'm trying to work together with the families to take steps to make participating in society easier. This can be in different ways, for example stimulating the development of the child and training and advising the parents. Another aspect is raising awareness for this marginalized group in the community and training professionals. OT is not an official existing profession in the country yet, and I hope that we as OT's can make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities and that we will have Kazakhstani OT's working together with us in the future!

Edited by Bouwine van Eeden Petersman

This newsletter will be distributed every three months. Do you have any questions or recommendations? Or do you want to unsubscribe from the newsletter? Please contact info@ergotherapy.kz