

News

from the Kazakh Ergotherapy Association

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Word from the President

Evelien Visser



It's our sincere joy to welcome you to our first ever Kazakhstan Ergotherapy Association newsletter. In 2014 at World Occupational Therapy Day (27th of October) we were asked to consider starting an association of Occupational Therapists working in Kazakhstan. We can now proudly say that our constitutions are under review of the World Federation of Occupational Therapist (WFOT). We expect their approval soon and thereby the official start of KEA will be a fact. With Occupational Therapists working in Astana, Almaty and Shymkent, three of the main cities of Kazakhstan are already able to receive Occupational Therapy. We have close ties to many different projects and share the desire that Occupational Therapy will be extended over the country in the years ahead. Let me conclude with congratulating our Occupational Therapists and Kazakhstan with this first newsletter!

About our name

Ergotherapy is a name for Occupational Therapy (OT) used in many countries of Eurasia and Europe, for example Latvia. It would be consistent to use this same, internationally well established term. One of our aims is that Kazakhstan will have an internationally recognized Occupational Therapy degree. This will ensure that therapists who call themselves 'Ergotherapist', will also provide the quality that one may expect from an international Occupational Therapist.

Talking about Ergotherapy in Kazakh and Russian, we decided to call ourselves the Kazakh Ergotherapy Association (in short KEA). Or in local language: Қазақстан Эрготерапия Ассоциациясы (ҚЭА). We consider that using this term in our name will enable a better understanding of our association both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

First private OT centre Kazakhstan

Nathan Visser

The first private Occupational Therapy centre in Kazakhstan will soon open! Arman is excited to announce that sufficient investment has been found for its own premises and is pursuing the opening of a location April 2016. The centre will serve as a facility to display Occupational Therapy services and products by having a fully equipped therapy room and a showroom. We are convinced this centre will boost the profile of Occupational Therapy in Kazakhstan and serve KEA to display our profession. Check the website <http://arman-dream.kz> for more news!

Make it happen!

Nathan Visser

In April 2015 some local Kazakh friends in Astana were interested in the work of Arman and Occupational Therapy. They asked me: "What can we do for children with disabilities in Kazakhstan?" I shared about children with insufficient finances to afford high quality equipment and they started to seek ways to help. This resulted in <http://makeithappen.kz> being launched in August and the first client was funded by the end of that same year. In 2016 more clients were added and served, with more following. We do hope that this platform can become a great enabler for children in Kazakhstan.



Sensory Integration

Kirsty MacKinnon

From September to December 2015, I participated in the Ayres Sensory Integration training program through the University of Southern California in the United States. The program can be taken as part of a postgraduate degree for those completing their masters or doctorate in the US or can be taken as a continuing education program. The program consisted of lectures on theory and intervention as well as the neurobiological basis for sensory integration combined with practical application with our own caseload of children who had a variety of challenges including Autism, developmental delay and sensory processing disorder. We also received specialised training and certification in the application of the Sensory Integration and Processing Tests (SIPT).

Ayres Sensory Integration is focused primarily on addressing sensory issues related to sensory modulation and sensorimotor function within the vestibular, visual, proprioceptive and tactile systems as well as praxis and organisation of behaviour. The main goal of Ayres SI is for the individual to produce an appropriate response to an everyday experience. Our brains are continually taking in sensory information and processing it which “enables us to move and learn and behave in a productive manner”. When a problem/s occur in the child’s brain and they are unable to process sensory information appropriately we may see things such as tactile defensiveness, over responsiveness or under responsiveness to movement, poor postural mechanisms, poor ocular responses / control, poor proprioceptive processing, poor tactile discrimination, and poor bilateral integration.

Intervention is individualised to meet the needs of the child, is functionally based and the child is always an active participant in therapy. Initial assessment, informal and clinical observations of the child as well as consultation with family members / primary caregivers are essential to get a complete picture of sensory processing difficulties. As sensory integration issues are neurobiologically based, each intervention must target specific neuro receptors in order for change to occur. In the case of a sensory modulation issue such as tactile defensiveness an inhibitory input is being provided (proprioceptive, deep touch or linear vestibular movement) while the child is being introduced to new tactile stimuli.

Sensory Integration is an area of therapy which is continuing to be developed and researched around the world. It has been shown to be effective in treating kids with sensory processing issues. While there are still many questions about how we can use SI in its truest sense in Kazakhstan (mainly due to lack of specialised equipment and suitable environments at this point), I believe many of the kids we identify in Kazakhstan as having SP issues can benefit from SI treatment in some way using the basic principles.

Recommended Reading:

Ayres, A.J. (2005). *Sensory Integration and the Child. Understanding Hidden Sensory Challenges*. USA: Western Psychological Services.

Bundy, A.C, Lane, S.J & Murray E.A, (2002). *Sensory Integration Theory and Practice* (2nd ed.).

This newsletter will be spread every three months.

Do you have questions or recommendations? Or do you want to unsubscribe from the newsletter?

Please contact info@ergotherapy.kz