

speech therapy

Ann Kennelly
Regional Co-Coordinator for Disability Services
Laken
Dublin Road
Kilkenny

26 August 2005

RE: Ref AK/cm

Dear Ms Kennelly,

It is with great pleasure I submit to you the overall synopsis of the Release Speech Therapy Ballyowen Meadows Session.

Through the efforts made from eight Release private parents who participated in the original nine-week pilot session from January – March 2005, Release was given the opportunity to provide speech and language therapy services to 27 children at Ballyowen Meadows School, Beechpark Services from April – July 2005 while the resident speech and language therapist was on maternity leave.

Every parent, teacher and special needs assistant was invited to participate in each child's assessment and class. In all, 18 children were assessed (as one child had a recent assessment and the remaining eight had private Release assessments in January), and 27 children received a total of 243 hours of speech and language therapy training. Parents, teachers and SNAs were invited to attend every class. The complete cost of Release services (18 assessments and 243 hours of speech and language therapy) came to only €13,950.

It is extremely important to note that the significant majority of the students (26 of 27 students) attending Ballyowen Meadows had not received a recent formal assessment at Ballyowen Meadows or benefited from continuous speech and language services previous to Release's involvement in the school.

In addition, when notified of IEPs in advance, and schedule permitting, Jennifer Wetter, MS, CCC-SLP, participated on behalf of the child's speech and language therapy needs with the integrated team. This was done at no additional cost to Ballyowen Meadows.

As with the original pilot scheme, an analysis form was handed out to parents, teachers and SNAs at the end of the session. As you will see from Appendix A, 100% of all surveyed want to see the Release Programme continued into the 2005-2006 school year. Original survey forms are available for review upon request.

Release is in a strong position to become a pool of resource for the Health Service Executive, through providing Speech and Language Services within an integrated approach. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss the Release Speech Therapy's Programme's Pilot and successful session at Ballyowen Meadows with the Health Service Executive's Director's of Disability Group with a view to entering into a formal Service Level Agreement.

I am looking forward to a positive response to this letter, and am looking forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Warmest Regards,

Tara J Liston
Managing Director

CC: Eamonn Dunne, Principal, and PTO, Ballyowen Meadows School, Beechpark Services
Grainne Bray, Director of Services, Beechpark Services
John O'Brien, Office of the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children
Deirdre Carroll, General Secretary NAMHI

**Release Speech Therapy
Ballyowen Meadows
Beechpark Services
Programme Analysis**

April – July 2005

Submitted To:

Ann Kennelly
Regional Co-Coordinator for Disability Services
Laken
Dublin Road
Kilkenny

Eamonn Dunne and PTO
Ballyowen Meadows
Beechpark Services
Stillorgan
Co. Dublin

Grainne Bray, Director of Services
Beechpark Services
Bryan S Ryan Buildings
Enterprise Centre
Main Rd
Tallaght
Dublin 24

John O'Brien
Office of the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2

Deirdre Carroll
General Secretary
NAMHI
5 Fitzwilliam Place
Dublin 2

Submitted By:

Tara J Liston - Cunningham
Managing Director
Release Speech Therapy

26 August 2005

Release's Accomplishments

Our experience proves Release can be an invaluable pool of resource for the Health Service Executive by providing an integrated approach ensuring continuity in the system.

Release Speech Therapy began its pilot programme in January 2005. At the end of the nine-week session, the classes were so successful, eight Release parents whose children attend Ballyowen Meadows School for children with Autism—with the support of their children's teachers—successfully convinced the school principal, team of school therapists, and the Health Authorities to have Release brought into their school.

The programme, which began in late April came to a close on 15 July, with 18 children receiving assessments and 27 children taught in the parent, teacher and child focused nine-week course.

This newly formed private / public partnership has successfully integrated into every child's IEP at Ballyowen Meadows and we are therefore able to provide the key missing component of Speech and Language Therapy for all 27 children—thereby affording each child a proper and continuous holistic therapy programme.

Release Goals upon Start of Pilot Programme

1. To guarantee every child attending Ballyowen Meadows School had a proper speech and language assessment with report.
2. To ensure the Release Speech Therapy Programme group therapy approach worked for the children, parents, teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs).
3. To work closely with the Principal, teachers and SNAs to develop a schedule this would not infringe upon the students structured activities.
4. To have parents, teachers and SNAs attend each class in order to carry over the work taught to the individual children into their daily lives, both at home and at school.
5. To have every parent sign the Release Speech Therapy Care Contract and adhere to its rules.

Pilot Scheme Successes

Release has made significant strides in meeting these goals. The following are examples of accomplishments:

1. Jennifer Wetter, MS, CCC-SLP began assessing 18 children on 25 April. By 26 May, 15 of the 18 assessment reports were handed into Principal Eamonn Dunne. Three children had not received the formal assessment as one was consistently absent; one child had a tantrum during the assessment and we were awaiting the new date his parent could attend; and finally one child's at-home assessment was never received. All assessments and reports were completed by the end of June.
2. The Release Programme brought about significant positive changes to every student attending the course—for example the below are quotes taken from parents, teachers and SNAs:
 - "improved listening skills; turn taking; memory; articulation"
 - "better understanding of words, feelings, seasons, prepositions etc."
 - "attends for larger periods"
 - "tolerance of hummingbird around face and in mouth—ie. Improvement in sensory areas"
 - "follows schedules"
 - "check / choosing / waiting...sharing"
 - "much more interested in speaking"

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- “now speaking in full sentences”
 - “the group situation is of great benefit for turn taking / waiting / social skills building etc.”
 - “improvements in attending skills; structure of language; participation in group activities”
 - “making more of an effort to pronounce her letters better”
 - “better and better knowledge of ‘wh’ questions”
 - “increase in speech, vocab, understanding of his motivation for learning. He was more relaxed at home and we were able to continue the speech”
 - “the routine / schedule was very helpful and they enjoyed making the sounds. I’m sure with continued sessions phonetic productions would improve even more”
 - “better recognition of emotions by all kids”
 - “I have noticed improvements in all children. These include concentration, enjoyment in practicing facial movements and level of volume in speech.
3. 100% or every parent, teacher and SNA surveyed stated they wanted to see the Release Speech Therapy Programme continued in the 2005-2006 school year.
 4. When schedule permitted, Jennifer Wetter, MS, CCC-SLP attended and participated in individual children’s IEPs, as part of the integrated team for Beechpark Services.

Focus Points for Future Sessions

1. Many teachers of our students found the children progressing; Release thereby used these opportunities to integrate the course work into each child’s IEP (when available).
 - a. The major goal of Release is to be part of the HSE’s IEP process for those being cared for, or currently awaiting placements on waiting lists.
2. Time commitment is the largest issue for every parent involved in the Programme.
 - a. It proved difficult for the families in the Programme to find the time to do the ½ hour of homework per night—however all families found the classes promoted their child’s communication.

Moving Forward with the Health Service Executive

1. Speech and Language Therapy is not a stand alone programme, and should be part of an integrated approach, to afford continuity in the system.
2. We at Release would be in favour of further integration with State-run Services in order to contribute to each child’s IEP – in order to create a holistic programme written specifically for each child.
3. With the successful pilot and now the successes with Ballyowen Meadows proving the therapy works in both areans, we at Release are convinced the HSE no longer needs to be without Speech and Language Therapy.

With a Service Level Agreement in place with the HSE, Release can:

1. help fill the huge vacancy for Speech and Language Therapy in Ireland
 - a. through a proven level of recruitment of Speech and Language Therapists from abroad, to increase rather than reallocate the scarce resource.
 - b. through the successful group therapy approach, which enables the child, parent, and school—i.e. teachers and SNAs.
2. close the gap State-run Services are facing on a day-to-day basis with regards to Speech and Language Therapy.
 - a. both in the provision of services as well as recruitment
3. help the HSE provide a better service to its clients, through an integrated approach, ensuring continuity in the system.

End of Session Parent Review Quotes¹

1. "To be honest, I had mixed feelings about the Release classes...his original assessment did not go well, his behaviour was such that it was an hour long and wasn't completed at that time.

The classes themselves did not start great due to behaviour related problems with the children. However, things did settle down...it was hard on the children, they never do an hour long session in class.

I did feel the deviation of the class was a factor but they seemed to get used to it. I talked to the therapist (Jenny) about my concerns and my concerns were very much taken account of and I've been happy with the classes since.

I found the techniques helpful but find it hard to spent the time at home...*** knows what I'm up to and won't comply! The social stories were really good.

I am VERY MUCH in favour of Release continuing in September. The kids were only getting used to it when the course was up so I feel another session would be even more beneficial. A bigger room would be better!

I feel ***'s use of inappropriate 'silly' language has greatly improved recently..."

2. "I found the overall content and presentation to be very good and beneficial. My child responded reasonably well in class but I found that when I tried techniques and homework at home she responded far better as she responds generally better...Overall, I thought it was good."
3. "Very good, helpful. Learned a lot. Would really need this class in the new year. Jennie is an excellent teacher."
4. "Thanks for the excellent speech and language support provided. The weekly sessions have been very beneficial to *** and ME. I'm over the moon that Release has been conducted in the school and would love to see it continue."
5. "I found the Release sessions very enjoyable and beneficial to the children.

I noticed in group time that when we did the 'ooh', 'ahh' etc exercises, each child was very involved simultaneously which is rare.

I think it is lovely that the parents are involved and that we all do group activities together."

6. *** enjoyed and looked forward to the speech class. She worked well with Jenny & related well to her. She loved the face exercises and responded well to group activities. The thing I like was the games which she didn't do much of at home. Thanks a million. Hope it goes on next year, and I can come more regularly."

¹ End of Session original documents available upon request for viewing. Copies will not be furnished for data protection.

Jennifer Wetter, MS, CCC-SLP, Director of Speech and Language Therapy, also known as Jen or Jenny below.

*** indicates child's name withheld

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7. "Excellent programme. I would highly recommend that it continue next year."
8. "I found the whole Release experience so informative and exciting for the children in my class. Each staff member of Class 4, both teachers, and in our case job sharing teachers, and SNAs attended sessions. Jenny and her staff were wonderful with the children and adults and guided us brilliantly ever step of the way. The sessions were interactive and fun. We've all learnt such a lot and I do hope Release will continue in Ballyowen Meadows School."
9. "We are really very pleased with ***'s progress and would like Release to continue until and beyond the return of the SLT Beechpark – Jackie – next November."
10. "I have learned insight into ***'s strengths and learned different teaching approaches. Great to join in and see him with his peers. I really enjoyed being part of the school day. As much as you talk to teachers and SNAs you get more out of being there."
11. "I learned new and motivating ways to teach prepositions / opposites etc. Great advice given by Jenny on a variety of areas that have arisen during the sessions. I've learned a lot from other mothers and their kids too.

Keep up the good work. Really finding the sessions of huge benefit because the page of homework ideas is a real motivator to do work at home."
12. "I learned how to follow a schedule, reinforcement, folder work, the benefits of sensory work, and initiation of sounds."
13. "I learned new and fund ways of presenting material; strategies for preparing child for Release session eg proactive table schedule; strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour; the importance of repetition, homework; and using situations as they arise to teach important concepts eg. Danger, clubbing is dangerous."

Appendix A--Results of Ballyowen Meadows April – July 2005

Question	lowest			highest	
	1	2	3	4	5
Assessments					
I found the At-Home Assessment relevant and helpful for the Release Assessment			2	1	4
The Release therapist was well prepared for my child's assessment.			1	3	5
The Release therapist explained the tests being performed, and worked well with my child.			1	1	6
The Release Assessment Report was comprehensive and conclusions offered positive next steps helpful to parents and teachers (where applicable).				1	5
Totals	0	0	4	6	20
Classes					
Did Release Classes promote new skills acquisition?			1	4	8
Did the therapist use communication and supports systems appropriate to your			1	2	10
Did the therapist spend time with you and your child for individual instruction?		1	2	6	5
Did the therapist teach techniques designed to accomplish goals discussed at the beginning of each class?				1	11
The homework was well-explained and backed by useful handouts.			1	3	8
I was able to find the time to work with my child for ½ hour per day.			7	5	1
I was able to take what I learned in Release and implement it into my child's daily life				10	3
I found the therapist receptive to my ideas and made changes to classes accordingly.			1	2	7
Totals	0	1	13	33	53
Overall Session					
I felt the Release Team worked well with my child			1		11
I feel one hour per week of speech instruction was helpful for both me and my child				1	11
I would like to see the Release Promme continued in 2005-2006 school year.					13
Totals	0	0	1	1	35