

Release Communication Intervention Ltd
speech and language therapy
oral motor therapy
early intervention
occupational exercises

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free Speech and Language Therapy Programme for young children to open in Dundalk and form part of a research study into the management of language difficulties for children.

Release Communication Intervention is a speech and language therapy programme which has worked successfully with over 430 children of varying communication difficulties in Dublin since 2005. Release is commencing a six month Speech and Language Therapy programme in Dundalk and is seeking 100 children from the area, aged between less than 1 year and 5 years, with language difficulties to register for the programme. An information evening will be held on Monday, 3 March at The Fairways Hotel, from 7:00 – 9:00pm where interested parents can meet the Release Programme staff.

The Release Programme in Dundalk will offer children who are accepted a full speech and language therapy assessment, up to 27 hours of speech and language therapy –that’s one hour per week and a reassessment at the end of six months therapy. This six month programme is being offered as a FREE service because of a number of generous donations including The Iris O’Brien Foundation. This funding will allow 100 children aged between under 1 and 5 years old, of varying communication disorders in the Dundalk region, to participate in the programme and be part of quantitative research that will monitor the improvement in language and communication skills among the children over the six month period. **Registration for this programme is now open and ends on 7 March 2008.**

Maria Levins from Termonfeckin has travelled with her son Darragh for the last eighteen months to the Release Programme in North Dublin. She stated , “This is a great opportunity for so many young families in Dundalk. The Release programme has made a substantial difference in Darragh’s communication skills and therefore his life.” Maria is a primary school teacher and said, “Every week I am taught new ideas and skills to bring home for daily practice. Now our whole family has the tools they need to help Darragh communicate with us.”

Jennifer Wetter is the Release Programmes Director of Speech and Language Therapy said, “We are delighted to be starting our second school in Dundalk and are greatly looking forward to working with these 100 children.” Jennifer continued, “Irish Autism Action and Down Syndrome Ireland have informed many of their members and the uptake has already been excellent. That said, we really want to make sure every single person who can benefit from the Release program will find out about this opportunity!”

The six month programme will be monitored for research purposes and the research is 100% Data Protection compliant. The objective of the research is to provide quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of the Release programme and how it increases language and communication skills for children with disabilities. As part of the Data Protection requirements, no child’s name will be used in the research findings, nor will any other service provider have access to participant’s personal information or participation.

Dr Debbie Brassell, Release’s Director of Research, has over 30 years experience in speech and language therapy and will be based in Dundalk completing all assessments while coordinating the research . “I have been working with Release since September 2007, and the work I have seen and

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been involved with to date has been extraordinary. Since Release began, 15 previously non-verbal Release children are now speaking; nine children have transitioned into mainstream school with six currently transitioning." Debbie continued, "I am looking forward to the results of the research—which will hopefully prove without a doubt, including parents in continuous speech and language therapy greatly increases a child's communication skills."

This six month programme would typically cost €2675 and is being offered for free to interested and qualifying families as the funding has been kindly donated and forms part of an important research process. Any family with a child who has language difficulties and who meets the following criteria is invited to apply for participation:

- Register your interest on www.release.ie/prereg or call 01.853.1578 before 7 March 2008
- Participating children must be within the ages of birth to six years two months of age on 21 December 2008
- The child must have a moderate to severe impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Aspergers, PDD, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy etc.
- Must be located a maximum distance of one hour from the Release Centre in Dundalk.
 - Located at 59 Castle Rd, Dundalk, Co. Louth
- Willing to fully participate in the research into the effectiveness of the Release programme
- Parents must be committed to attend and participate in weekly one hour sessions
- Availability for program dates: Assessments begin 10 March 2008, Therapy begins 27 April, Reassessments begin 17 November, Therapy concludes 21 December 2008
- Caregivers and participants must agree to no additional speech therapy during the research (concluding 21 December 2008).

There is no guarantee a parent and child's application will be accepted into the program. Places are filled on a first come-first served basis, so register now to avoid disappointment!

An information evening will be held on Monday, 3 March at The Fairways Hotel, from 7:00 – 9:00pm where parents can ask 1:1 questions to the Release staff.

To register your interest before 7 March 2008 deadline, please visit www.release.ie/prereg or ring Release on 01.853.1578.

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For Press Only:

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