

communication intervention

**Speech and Language Therapy
Occupational Exercises
Early Intervention
Oral Motor Therapy**

James O'Grady
National Manager Disability Services
32-33 Catherine St
Limerick

16 June 2006

Dear James:

It gives me great pleasure to enclose the End of Session Analysis for the January – April 2006 session.

Since opening our doors in January 2005, we have worked with over 190 children and provided over 2300 hours of speech and language therapy.

During this 11-week session, we worked with 35 children of varying disabilities and assessed a further 35 children.

For one family, a nine year old girl with Down syndrome moved from two - three word sentences to full, clear explanatory seven-word sentences.

Another child, who is five with cerebral palsy, was for the most part only able to speak one – two single syllable intelligible words. She is now speaking these words clearly and is able to answer questions.

One grandmother called into Release to thank us--she said she now has hope for her 16 year old grandson.

Release worked with St John of God's Menni Services to assess 17 of their students last year. They were so pleased with the assessments, report and follow-thru, they have retained Release to provide speech and language assessments for 14 students in Tallaght and Islandbridge.

We are confident of our program and its ability to make positive change for parents and children with disabilities in Ireland.

I want to reiterate that we are extremely excited about the changes you are proposing for the Health Service Executive with regards to people with disabilities, and in particular Early Intervention.

We are still very interested in continuing our discussion about the potential of a national pilot of Release as we discussed within the services.

Feel free to contact me directly on 087.247.3486 should you or your peers have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

Tara Cunningham
Managing Director

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**Release Speech Therapy
Ballyowen Meadows
Beechpark Services /
Private Session
Programme Analysis**

January – April 2006

CC:

Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children
Mary Harney
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2

Minister for Finance
Brian Cowen, T.D.
Department of Finance
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2

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

Tom Kelly
Office of the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2

Deirdre Carroll
General Secretary
Inclusion Ireland
Unit C2
The Steel Works
Foley St
Dublin 1

Liam O'Callaghan
Local Health Manager
Central Office
Arden Rd
Tullamore
Co. Offaly

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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 opened its doors in January 2005 to provide speech and language therapy to children with varying disabilities, through teaching not only the child, but also the caregivers. To date we have worked with over 190 children and provided over 2300 hours of speech and language therapy!

Release classes provide speech and language therapy, through play-based interaction, giving students the opportunity to progress social interaction with their peers.

Although the program is taught in groups, caregivers and children still receive individual attention in every class, ensuring the caregivers understand their role fully before going home to work on their daily homework.

At the end of every week, a Release student has the opportunity to have over three hours of speech and language therapy.

What's even better, when the children progress, it's the parents who get the credit!!! Therefore, Release parents, BUY INTO THE PROGRAM!!!

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 private programme our success with Ballyowen Meadows and St John of Gods, we have proved without a doubt the therapy works in both public and private arenas.
4. The HSE no longer needs to be without Speech and Language Therapy because Release is a proven available resource.

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 the capacity of providing assessments and continuous, weekly speech and language therapy.
 - b. through the successful group therapy approach, which enables the child, parent, and school—i.e. teachers and SNAs to learn the skills they need to progress the child's communication.
 - c. through a proven level of recruitment of Speech and Language Therapists from abroad, to increase rather than reallocate the scarce resource.
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.

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End of Session Parent Review Quotes¹

1. "Found the course very good and well organised. It is difficult for *** to maintain interest and concentrate for longer than 30 minutes usually, but the fact that the sessions encompasses lots of reactions and activities, made this easier."
2. "Release has been a lifeline to *** and myself. *** would not be where he is today had it not been for Release, and in particular, Jenny...these individual sessions are vital if *** is to learn to have choices and more control over his own life.

We hope he will be able to vocalize sounds and words one day, but if not, he, at least knows and recognises cards and words and can operate the communication aid to let us know what HE wants.

- Jenny, thanks so much for all your hard work and support. It is very much appreciated."
3. "Thanks Jenny. Very helpful for me as a Mum to see *** work in a classroom situation—it makes me feel good when he does work etc. "
 4. "Found new ideas on how to promote ***'s speech. *** enjoyed both the class and the homework."
 5. "***'s speech has improved a lot since beginning with Release, although his class was on a one to one basis. I feel if he is to need more therapy he would benefit from a group situation. The fact that he had one to one has worked brilliantly for ***. Jenny and Neil were great with ***. I feel that he would be ready for a group now."
 6. "Enjoyed all the classes and so did ***. Thank you Jen!"
 7. "More confidence in speaking – he has quite a bit of language but shy about using it."
 8. "*** loves going. That says it all!"
 9. "I found the programme wonderful, thoroughly enjoyable, hence both I and *** looked forward to each session. This would be very important to me as I don't want ***'s speech therapy to feel like a chore.

Jennifer's positive upbeat approach is very encouraging. I like how each class is broken down into nice simple ideas. The "homework" is manageable because it's not too invasive on family day to day activities. I liked how we were given ideas on simple ways to improve our child's speech, ie going to the shop, in a restaurant. Both *** and I enjoy her taking on these responsibilities and we've received positive feedback and patience from shop keepers, waiters etc."

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.
Neil Hartery was the Special Needs Assistant for this session.

*** indicates child's name withheld

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Appendix A--Results of End of Session Review

	lowest				highest
Question	1	2	3	4	5
Assessments					
I found the At-Home Assessment relevant and helpful for the Release Assessment			3	4	4
The Release therapist was well prepared for my child's assessment.				4	9
The Release therapist explained the tests being performed, and worked well with my child.				4	10
The Release Assessment Report was comprehensive and conclusions offered positive next steps helpful to parents and teachers (where applicable).			1	3	10
Totals	0	0	4	15	33
Classes					
Did Release Classes promote new skills acquisition?			1	7	12
Did the therapist use communication and supports systems appropriate to your child's cognitive abilities?				6	15
Did the therapist spend time with you and your child for individual instruction?		1	1	4	15
Did the therapist implement plans designed to accomplish goals discussed at the beginning of each class?			2	5	13
The homework was well-explained and backed by useful handouts.				7	14
I was able to find the time to work with my child for ½ hour per day.		3	8	9	1
I found the therapist receptive to my ideas and made changes to classes accordingly.			1	5	8
Totals	0	4	13	43	78
Overall Session					
I feel the course is well valued.		2		3	16
I found this session to be extremely helpful to my child and to me.	1		2	4	14
I will attend another Session at Release		1		2	13
I will refer friend(s) to the programme			1	1	16
Totals	1	3	3	10	59