

**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

20 August 2006

Dear James:

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

Since opening our doors in January 2005, we have worked with over 240 children and provided over 2600 hours of speech and language therapy.

During this 11-week session, we worked with 37 children of varying disabilities and assessed a further 30 children.

Release success lies not only with speech and language—we work with the families to build entire communication answers for the child, their family and friends. This can be clearly shown by one of the parent's end of session survey quotes regarding what she wants to see in the upcoming session,

“We found the Release program hugely beneficial to \*\*\*. He has started saying words and making sounds that he wasn't before. His language has started to become spontaneous and meaningful.

We would like support to help \*\*\* continue in this way, especially with verbalising his needs and eventually to putting two words together.

We would like help with implementing a schedule at home for \*\*\*'s bedtime routine as we sometimes have problems at this time and we feel the formality of a scheduled routine may help.

Overall, we are delighted with \*\*\*'s progress, long may it continue. Many thanks to Jennifer and all the other staff.”

Release successfully completed our contract with St John of God's Menni Services to assess 11 of their students. They are currently trying to resource funding for their staff to participate in a Release All-Day Seminar, as well as assessments for up to five other students. We are delighted about the relationship we have built over the past 14 months with these dedicated service providers.

Release will be presenting its second All-Day Seminar in Mullingar, hosted by the Westmeath Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland. Our first All-Day Seminar, held in Longford by Parents-for-Parents in May was a resounding success, with service providers, speech and language therapists, and of course parents giving Release top scores on the Parents-for-Parents survey.

Finally, we are delighted to report we will be working with 20 children at St Declan's Special School, Northumberland Rd., Dublin 4 from September of this year. If funding can be acquired, this number will increase to 47 children in January 2007.

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

**communication intervention**

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

---

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

**communication intervention**

Speech and Language Therapy  
Occupational Exercises  
Early Intervention  
Oral Motor Therapy

**Release Speech Therapy  
Private Session  
Programme Analysis**

**May - July 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

## communication intervention

Speech and Language Therapy  
Occupational Exercises  
Early Intervention  
Oral Motor Therapy

### **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 220 children and provided over 2600 hours of speech and language therapy!

Tara Cunningham, MD, recently visited a Director of Disability Services, who asked to see how many people from her area had enrolled in Release. She was quite surprised by the high number of parents quoted. Tara let her see the addresses only of our database. The Director recognised a few of the addresses as "problem parents". Tara was quite happy to inform her, that her "problem parents" are quite happy with Release.

This makes a significant point:

Parents are happier with a service they are forced to pay for, than they are with the HSE's current service provision. This is down to the massive difference between our service, and that of the HSE. Besides being able to offer assessments followed by continuous speech and language therapy, we teach the parents how to work with their children. And when the children progress, it's the parents who get the credit!!! Therefore, Release parents, BUY INTO THE PROGRAM!!!

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.

### **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, and our upcoming work with St Declan's Special School, 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.

**communication intervention**

Speech and Language Therapy  
Occupational Exercises  
Early Intervention  
Oral Motor 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 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.

**End of Session Parent Review Quotes<sup>1</sup>**

1. “\*\*\* enjoyed the classes immensely, and we see some positive changes. We know that changes will only happen slowly over time.”
2. “Release continues to provide \*\*\* with regular and very useful Speech and Language Therapy sessions. We will definitely be coming back. \*\*\* can be resistant sometimes (not always) at beginning of class but he usually is enthusiastic towards the end.”
3. “\*\*\* takes a while to feel comfortable with new people, therefore it was little steps in the beginning to get \*\*\* use to coming, and he benefited from therapy. He needs more support to help him improve his attention span, plus he needs more therapy to work on articulation...the therapy was EXCELLENT and I've gained some really helpful ideas.”
4. “Another great term with Release. Thank you for your support and wonderful ideas. \*\*\* is coming on great with all the work.”
5. “Jennifer, as always well done. These sessions were fantastic. \*\*\* has learnt so much over the past couple of months. I am delighted with the format of class and the vast scope of activities covered. Keep up the good work.

Great support provided by Catherine. She is a great help.

All the activities we have done this term have been easy to set up and do at home. Huge advantage in this to reinforce what has been done during class time.

Many thanks and see you in September.”

---

<sup>1</sup> 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. Catherine Wood was the Special Needs Assistant for this session.

\*\*\* indicates child's name withheld

**communication intervention**

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

6. "We found the Release program hugely beneficial to \*\*\*. He has started saying words and making sounds that he wasn't before. His language has started to become spontaneous and meaningful.

We would like support to help \*\*\* continue in this way, especially with verbalising his needs and eventually to putting two words together. We would like help with implementing a schedule at home for \*\*\*'s bedtime routine as we sometimes have problems at this time and we feel the formality of a scheduled routine may help.

Overall, we are delighted with \*\*\*'s progress, long may it continue. Many thanks to Jennifer and all the other staff."

7. "The class was a great help to \*\*\*, which we appreciate. Thanks to you all so much."
8. "Jenny was just great. Patience is obviously a great virtue of her as \*\*\* can be trying at times!"
9. "We have found the classes great at training us to incorporate therapy and everyday life, and are seeing the results. We are very happy with these classes."
10. "Group work brings out the best in \*\*\* and makes the work more fun. Release programme gave us all more hope. The attitude of something CAN be done was great after so much negativity from other sources."
11. "I feel \*\*\* has really come out and become much more confident as the classes progressed.

She still has a long way to go. I feel she will do well. Jenny is brilliant with \*\*\*. She has great patience with her and motivates \*\*\* when she sometimes does not want to work, especially on her own.

\*\*\* loves working with other children. She loves group therapy. Thank you so much."

communication intervention

Speech and Language Therapy  
Occupational Exercises  
Early Intervention  
Oral Motor Therapy

**Appendix A--Results of End of Session Review**

	lowest			highest	
Question	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Assessments</b>					
I found the At-Home Assessment relevant and helpful for the Release Assessment				3	7
The Release therapist was well prepared for my child's assessment.				2	10
The Release therapist explained the tests being performed, and worked well with my child.				1	11
The Release Assessment Report was comprehensive and conclusions offered positive next steps helpful to parents and teachers (where applicable).				1	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Classes</b>					
Did Release Classes promote new skills acquisition?				6	10
Did the therapist use communication and supports systems appropriate to your child's cognitive abilities?				1	15
Did the therapist spend time with you and your child for individual instruction?		1		2	13
Did the therapist implement plans designed to accomplish goals discussed at the beginning of each class?	1	1		2	12
The homework was well-explained and backed by useful handouts.	2			3	10
I was able to find the time to work with my child for ½ hour per day.	1	2	4	3	5
I found the therapist receptive to my ideas and made changes to classes accordingly.				4	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Overall Session</b>					
I feel the course is well valued.				2	12
I found this session to be extremely helpful to my child and to me.			1	3	12
I will attend another Session at Release				1	13
I will refer friend(s) to the programme				1	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>51</b>