

# Release

## Communication Intervention



Volume 2, Issue 1

August 2006

### What's New

- You may be eligible for the Medical Card or GP Visit Card
- A Seeing Eye Dog for Autism?
- HSE Update—National Pilot on the cards?

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- Over 220 children
- Over 2300 hours of speech and language therapy delivered
- Consistent parent and family focused therapy
- Play-based
- Low-cost

### Murray Whooley Gains Assistance Dog

Last February I read an article in the Health Supplement of the Irish Times about Assistance Dogs for autistic children. This scheme which has been in operation in Canada for several years was operating a pilot scheme in Ireland through Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. Following on from the success of the initial placements of Assistance Dogs with five autistic children throughout the country applications were being sought from more families. We immediately applied and after going through a rigorous assessment programme which included one to one interviews with every member of the family we were really delighted to get a phone call last June asking could I go down to the IGDB Training Centre in Cork for a week to train with an Assistance Dog for our son, Murray, who is seven years old (the youngest child to have received a dog is 3 and there is an upper age limit of 10 years old).

After a week in Cork and a lot of intensive training I arrived home with Clive, a Goldendoodle on Saturday, 24 June. It is fantastic the difference Clive has made to Murray in only a short time. Murray is so happy to go anywhere with Clive now. Murray will stay for far longer in friend's houses, shops, restaurants. He really enjoys walking with Clive everyday – he is attached by a belt around his waist to Clive's collar and he also holds a handle attached to the jacket that Clive wears. He enjoys helping to groom Clive everyday and in particular to help making up his feeds and blowing the feeding whistle every evening. Irish Guide Dogs visited us at home twice a week every week for the first month to ensure that Clive was working well with us and we were working correctly with Clive.



Clive and Murray have become great friends in the short time that Clive has been with us and we couldn't imagine life without Clive now. Clive sleeps in Murray's room at night and comes everywhere with us now. We have applied for a Pet Passport for Clive and he will come away on holidays with us in future – for the moment, we are bringing him back down to Cork at the beginning of September to visit his pals at Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind when they celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The benefits of an Assistance Dog for an autistic child are immense in terms of helping with children who bolt, helping to increase the confidence of the child, helping to increase their social and communication skills and most of all, providing a really loving and loyal friend for your autistic child. It costs over €25,000 to train an Assistance Dog so Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind appreciate any help with fundraising to continue to provide more Assistance Dogs for this worthwhile and beneficial programme.

Fiona Whooley, 16 August 2006—

We are absolutely delighted for Murray and his family. To help provide more Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, Release will be hosting a fundraising event during the upcoming session. If you have any ideas, or would like to help, just let Jenny or Tara know. Thanks!

### Autumn Session

8 September —

16 December 2006

Register today!

Winter break

24—30 October

### Jenny's Picks of the Month

#### Book of the Month:

Books by Carol Gray:

The New Social Story Book; My Social Stories Book; Comic Strip Conversations

Great pre-made social stories to help children learn a variety of social skills. They can be found at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

#### Websites of the Month:

Game ideas to play with your baby, as well as online games: <http://www.fun-baby-games-online.com>

Phonemic Awareness is a key element in learning to read as well as a child's phonological development. This is a great site that teaches you what exactly phonemic awareness is as well as gives you online games to play with your child: <http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/rcompindex1.htm>

## Medical Card and GP Visit Card Ready Reckoner

A relatively new website [www.medicalcard.ie](http://www.medicalcard.ie) has an online calculator which you detail anonymously:

Your age; marital status; number of dependents; if married, the age of your spouse; how many dependent children; weekly income; weekly outgoings—Rent or mortgage? Childminding? Travel to work? (.50 cent per mile).

With the inclusion of your weekly outgoings, even dual income families with relatively high paying jobs may be eligible for either the Medical Card or the GP Visit Card.

### Some guidelines

#### Medical Cards

There are three main categories of people entitled to a medical card—however the two most relevant are:

1. Applicants and their dependants whose assessable income comes within the financial guidelines
2. Applicants whose assessable income is in excess of the guidelines, *but where a medical card is granted to ensure the financial burden of medical or social circumstances does not cause undue hardship.*\*\*

Even though you may not be automatically eligible for the Medical Card, when applying you should “*demonstrate undo hardship*”

#### GP Visit Card

There are two categories of people entitled to a G.P. Visit Card:

1. Applicants and their dependants whose assessable income comes within the relevant financial guidelines
2. Applicants whose assessable income is in excess of the financial guidelines but where a GP visit card is granted to ensure the financial burden of medical or social circumstances does not cause undue burden.\*\*

As with the Medical Card, if you are not automatically eligible, please include with your application a letter explaining the “undue burden” you have.

As explained to me, not getting two holidays abroad does not constitute “undo hardship” or “undo burden”. The realities of actual set backs to you and your children’s lives do.

\*\* Contact your local health office of the Health Service Executive for more information and to obtain assistance in making an application.

The below spreadsheet will give you an outline of what you can expect with regards to Medical Card or GP Visit Card eligibility.

## Spreadsheet for Weekly Incoming / Outgoings

|   | Med Card        | GPV Card      | WEEKLY OUTGOINGS |            | Total Outgoings | Total Guidelines |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
|   | Base guidelines |               | Mortgage /rent   | Child-care | Travel to work  |                  |
| <b>Single Person Living Alone</b>       |                 |               |                  |            |                 |                  |
| <b>Aged up to 65 years</b>              | <b>184.00</b>   | <b>276.00</b> | <b>100</b>       | <b>0</b>   | <b>50</b>       | <b>426.00</b>    |
| Aged between 66-69 years                | 201.50          | 303.00        | 100              | 0          | 50              | 453.00           |
| <b>Single Person Living with Family</b> |                 |               |                  |            |                 |                  |
| Aged up to 65 years                     | 164.00          | 246.00        | 0                | 0          | 50              | 296.00           |
| Aged between 66 - 69 years              | 173.50          | 260.00        | 0                | 0          | 50              | 310.00           |

**Married Couple / Single Parent Families with Dependent Children**

|                        |               |               |            |            |            |            |                 |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Aged up to 65 years    | 266.50        | 400.00        | 200        | 0          | 100        | 300        | 700.00          |
| With 1 Child           | 304.50        | 457.00        | 200        | 150        | 100        | 450        | 907.00          |
| With 2 Children        | 342.50        | 514.00        | 200        | 300        | 100        | 600        | 1,114.00        |
| With 3 Children        | 383.50        | 576.00        | 200        | 450        | 100        | 750        | 1,326.00        |
| With 4 Children        | 424.50        | 637.00        | 200        | 600        | 100        | 900        | 1,537.00        |
|                        |               |               |            |            |            |            |                 |
| Aged up to 65 years    | 266.50        | 400.00        | 250        | 0          | 100        | 350        | 750.00          |
| With 1 Child           | 304.50        | 457.00        | 250        | 150        | 100        | 500        | 957.00          |
| With 2 Children        | 342.50        | 514.00        | 250        | 300        | 100        | 650        | 1,164.00        |
| With 3 Children        | 383.50        | 576.00        | 250        | 450        | 100        | 800        | 1,376.00        |
| <b>With 4 Children</b> | <b>424.50</b> | <b>637.00</b> | <b>250</b> | <b>600</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>950</b> | <b>1,587.00</b> |
|                        |               |               |            |            |            |            |                 |
| Aged up to 65 years    | 266.50        | 400.00        | 300        | 0          | 100        | 400        | 800.00          |
| <b>With 1 Child</b>    | <b>304.50</b> | <b>457.00</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>550</b> | <b>1,007.00</b> |
| <b>With 2 Children</b> | <b>342.50</b> | <b>514.00</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>700</b> | <b>1,214.00</b> |
| With 3 Children        | 383.50        | 576.00        | 300        | 450        | 100        | 850        | 1,426.00        |
| With 4 Children        | 424.50        | 637.00        | 300        | 600        | 100        | 1000       | 1,637.00        |
|                        |               |               |            |            |            |            |                 |
| Aged up to 65 years    | 266.50        | 400.00        | 350        | 0          | 100        | 450        | 850.00          |
| With 1 Child           | 304.50        | 457.00        | 350        | 150        | 100        | 600        | 1,057.00        |
| With 2 Children        | 342.50        | 514.00        | 350        | 300        | 100        | 750        | 1,264.00        |
| With 3 Children        | 383.50        | 576.00        | 350        | 450        | 100        | 900        | 1,476.00        |
| With 4 Children        | 424.50        | 637.00        | 350        | 600        | 100        | 1050       | 1,687.00        |

↑  
**This is the amount of net income a person can earn if they have the out-goings shown**

## Would you and your friends like to learn a skill?

**Groups of ten can avail of the below two-hour classes (reduced fees to cover expense of €35 per hour)**

**Oral Motor Exercises** - Parents will practice various Oral Motor exercises for the tongue, lips, teeth, and jaw as well as breath support ideas

**Articulation** - Parents will learn about different techniques for improving their child's articulation. Techniques can be used for various sounds.

**Phonology** - Parents will learn about different techniques for improving their child's intelligibility through phonology therapy techniques. Phonemic Awareness skills will also be addressed.

**Folder Games** - Parents will learn what a folder game is and how they can be used. Participants will learn how to make folder games and will come out of the class with at least one folder game that they made.

**Categories** - Parents will learn techniques for teaching category knowledge to their child.

**Social Stories** - Parents will learn what a social story is and how they can be used in daily life to improve social skills. Parents will have the opportunity to create a social story for their child.

**Finished, Turn Taking, Inside / Outside Voices** - Parents will learn techniques to help their child with various social skills including the concepts of being finished, using appropriate loudness levels, waiting and turn taking.

**WH Questions and Following Directions** - Parents will learn techniques for teaching WH questions and following direction skills to their child.

**Boardmaker** - Parents will learn how to use Boardmaker and its benefits.

**Book your private group session today!**

## January—April; May—July Analysis Handed into HSE

At the end of every session, we ask Release Parents to fill out an End of Session Survey to determine how our programme has been delivered, and to quantify its success at home.

We do this review for three reasons: 1. to make sure all of our parents and children are getting benefits from our programme; 2. to give you another opportunity to tell us what you like, and what you would like us to do differently; and 3. to provide the HSE and relevant Ministers with quantitative analysis on how our programme is working.

To date, every End of Session Survey has our Release Parents giving us the highest ratings possible and to that we are very thankful to all of you.

**We are pleased to say the Tánaiste's top advisors are very impressed with our detailed analysis—in fact I heard "I've never seen anything so comprehensive!"**

**It's Release's view that all Service Providers get feedback from parents and their children in order to better themselves and their offerings.**

## Thank you and bye for now to our Intern, Briana

Another Release Intern has left us! Briana Horgan, who came to work for Release for the summer through the EUSA programme has headed home. She is getting ready to begin her junior (third) year at the University of Vermont, studying communication disorders. Already, Briana is looking into graduate schools and plans to attain her Masters in communication disorders. Briana thoroughly enjoyed her short time here and is looking forward to coming back to Ireland.

Hopefully we'll lure her back to Release! Briana wanted to let everyone know that she will miss everyone and thanks us all for the wonderful memories and great learning experience. If you or your child would like to write to Briana, please send it to us here at Release and we'll make sure she gets it!



## HSE Update

Tara and Jennifer met with the National Director of Disability Services James O'Grady on 24 May. The meeting went quite well, as Mr O'Grady mentioned a number of Director of Disabilities throughout Ireland put down Release as their answer to capacity issues for the People with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

We should find out at the end of August if we will be able to participate in a national pilot.

Keep writing to your Ministers and HSE representatives! Let's keep the pressure on!

## Calling all Northern Area Health Board Release Parents

Violet Harford, Disability Director for the former Northern Area Health Board—which includes most areas north of the Liffey, Co. Cavan, Co. Monaghan and Co. Louth would like to know from Release parents how they feel about the Release service, WHY you chose Release, and how you would rate the services provided by her team.

You CAN write the letter anonymously, it will not impact on your message.

The address to mail is Violet Harford, Director of Disabilities, Unit 2, Swords Business Campus, Balheary Road, Swords, Co. Dublin, or email [violet.harford@mailc.hse.ie](mailto:violet.harford@mailc.hse.ie).

**Release is a Communication Intervention programme, encompassing Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Exercises, Oral Motor Therapy and Early Intervention, designed to teach parents the skills they need to enhance their child's communication skills. The programme is taught in a group format, thereby increasing the numbers of people helped, while starting a peer-to-peer network.**