

Speech and Language
Therapy

Occupational
Exercises

Early Intervention

Oral Motor Therapy

What's New

- A tender is "Released"
- Release launches free online service
- Childforce.com to be piloted
- Denis O'Brien gives a huge donation for capital funds to Release
- Tara Cunningham becomes an Ashoka Fellow, and wins national awards for her work with Release

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- Over 400 Children
- Over 4000 hours of speech and language therapy delivered
- Consistent parent and family focused therapy
- Play-based
- Low-cost

Release

Communication Intervention



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Release Submits HSE Tender for Provision of Speech and Language Therapy Services

After lobbying the Department of Health and Children, the Health Service Executive and Primary, Community and Continuing Care (PCCC), a tender was released for the "Provision of Early Intervention Diagnostic & Treatment Speech and Language Therapy Services."

Release submitted a 440 page answer to the invitation to tender on 20 September 2007.

We have just been notified we are shortlisted, and will interview on 11 December. A report will be generated within five to seven days and given to the budget holder. So we should know this side of Christmas!

We sincerely hope we will win this tender—and can begin working within the HSE to provide CONTINUOUS speech and language therapy INCLUSIVE of caregivers!

Please keep your fingers crossed and prayers coming!

Sign up today for the 8-week Winter Session 6 January—8 March Midterm Break 10—16 Feb

To sign up ring the Release office at 853.1578 or e-mail Jenny at jenniferwetter@release.ie

www.release.ie/blog launched



Pictured at the launch, "Hammie" Jennifer Wetter, Tara Cunningham and Debbie Brassell.

Release is proud to announce the arrival of the free Release Blog—www.release.ie/blog

What is a blog? Short for "Web log," according to pvt.com, a blog is specialized site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences. Blogs with political or current-events themes have grown in popularity and become "soap boxes" for instant mass-audience commentary. And as we all know, the disability community are great ones for "soap boxes"! :)

www.release.ie/blog gives you an opportunity to comment on an article or tip, tell your own personal story or ask a question from our panel of contributors.

The contributors cover a wide range of knowledge. **Hammie**, is a mother of two children with Autism who gives practical tips to working with children on the spectrum; **Caroline Carswell**, a woman who was born profoundly deaf gives advice and inspiration to caregivers of deaf children; **Tara Cunningham**, who will point you in the right direction for services; and finally **Jennifer Wetter** and **Debbie Brassell** who will give speech and language therapy tips.

Visit www.release.ie/blog to participate and tell a friend!

Release and Solas to pilot the use of Childforce

Release brings another first in IEP service provision to Irish Autism Action's Solas Diagnostic Service.

Having carried out indepth research into international best practice in terms of supporting individualised service delivery, Childforce's founders felt there was a large gap in terms of providing professionals and parents with a consistent and up to date set of reports/picture of performance and progress.

The Childforce team identified the need for a much more integrated approach to co-ordinating input into

intervention programmes. As a result the Childforce team developed an interactive IEP online service where service providers can upload their reports, teachers, review goals and track milestones and parents could watch their child's progress live.

Having worked successfully in the US and England, the team called Release to complete the first Irish pilot of childforce.com. Tara and Jennifer realised very quickly this system will revolutionise IEP's and give caregivers an even better opportunity to participate in their child's education. Kevin Whelan, CEO of

Irish Autism Action quickly came on board and through the Solas Centre will pilot the program with 15 families over the next few months, with the goal of making it standard practice in 2008.

Dennis O'Brien gives Capital Grant to Release

Tara Cunningham met Denis O'Brien while sitting at his table during the launch of Ashoka Ireland in May 2007.

Tara laughed when he introduced himself—which shows you how modest he is and how uncouth she is!

Denis took a quick interest in the Release program—especially in the great work Release caregivers do.

A quick follow-up letter led to a meeting, where Denis asked particulars of the program, and then gave us a handsome donation to purchase extremely expensive assessment and classroom tools.

Release is a social enterprise—meaning the shareholders will never make a profit,—as all profit goes back into the program for scholarships and research.

Through his low giving profile, you may not know that Denis is a strong advocate for social entrepreneurship in Ireland and abroad. For example, he is building an entire school system in Haiti!

Those of you involved in Irish Autism Action know how difficult starting up one school is, imagine a school system...

Denis is also a keen advisor and donator to Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, where Release was previously a Level 2 Awardee. Tara now sits on their Board of Directors.

Michelle Hartnett, a Release intern has made a beautiful thank you card for our Release students to sign. If you haven't done so already please ask to sign it at your next class.

Everyone at Release want to acknowledge Denis O'Brien's selfless gift and thanks him sincerely for both the gift and ongoing support.

Trek Brazil for Release



Calling all Adventurers!

Would you, or even some of your friends be interested in a two week break Trekking Brazil—and raise much needed funds for Release scholarships and research?

Visit <http://www.acara.ie/braziltrek2008> or call Colette O'Sullivan 01.487.7150 today!

Release Welcomes Dr Debbie Brassell as Director of Research



Debbie Brassell
Director of Research

Sometimes Jen and I can't believe our luck—and that is certainly the case with Debbie Brassell's, PhD, JD, EJD, MS, CCC-SLP, IASLT, decision to join the Release team as Director of Research.

Debbie came across a Release recruitment ad for a Speech and Language Therapist position over the summer. Within weeks, she and her lovely husband Johnnie agreed to up stakes and move to Ireland, where they realised Debbie had an amazing opportunity to change the way speech and language therapy is delivered world-wide.

Having already presented at the ASHA Convention (the largest and most respected worldwide convention for speech and language therapists) Debbie is tasked with quantitatively researching the program's impact on both children and their caregivers. The goal is to present the findings at the 2009 ASHA Convention, thereby making Release world-wide best practice.

Debbie began her research in September with new students enrolled with Release.

Please join us in welcoming Debbie to our team!

Tara Cunningham becomes one of two Ashoka Fellows in Ireland

Over six months Tara and Release were scrutinised by Ashoka, the global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs. Officially announced in September, Tara became one of 1800 fellows elected since 1981 and only the second in Ireland.

The Ashoka Fellowship allows the Release program worldwide support in establishing the program as international best practice.

For more information on Ashoka Ireland visit www.ashoka.org.

Tara has also won the WMB Irish Life Social Entrepreneur of the Year and the David Manley Emerging Social Entrepreneur Award 2007. She has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors



Tara winning
WMB Irish Life Social
Entrepreneur of the Year

Jenny's Picks of the Month

Theme - Haircutting and Personal Hygiene

"My Haircut Sticker Book (Charlie & Lola)" by Lauren Child

"Tom's New Haircut (It's Ok!)" by Beth Robbins

"Katy's First Haircut" by Kathryn Gibbs Davis

"Will Gets a Haircut" by Olof Landstrom

"Taking Care of Myself: A Hygiene, Puberty and Personal Curriculum for Young People with Autism" by Mary Wrobel

All can be found on www.amazon.co.uk

Irish Independent Supplement Journalist Barbara Harding and its' MD give more than good publicity to Release

Release would like to give a huge thank you to journalist **Barbara Harding** who works for **Whitespace Publishing Group** and is editor of the 'Jobs and Careers' supplement in the Irish Independent. In early November, Barbara featured Release and Release parents in both 'Jobs and Careers' and the 'Mothers and Babies' supplements.

It turns out Barbara has spent her Saturdays teaching drama in the Downs Syndrome Kildare Branch for the past four years. If only more were like her!

She wrote an email to her team at Whitespace and within ten minutes began raising money to provide a scholarship for a year's worth of Release. This was followed directly by MD of Whitespace **Darren McAuliffe** and business partner **Ann O'Dea**, who stated they would match the money raised.

A very sincere thank you to Barbara Harding and the Whitespace Publishing team from all of us at Release.