

# Occupational Therapy Newsletter

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Hard at Work

**H**appy Valentine's! To help raise funds for the clinic, the OT department will be holding a Valentine's Day fundraiser. The students will be constructing a beautifully scented, calming aromatherapy heart. For a small donation, your aromatherapy heart can hang in your car, on your door or at your desk to aid in creating an environment that is calming for you and/or your student. Be on the lookout Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> as the students come around with full their hearts.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder and Gastrointestinal Track Problems

Research has shown that 70% of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) present with gastrointestinal (GI) problems. These GI issues can include constipation, diarrhea and abdominal pain. The pain associated with these conditions can range from mild to moderate. Most often children with ASD may have a difficult time communicating the pain they are feeling. Not having the tools to communicate their pain can turn into self-injurious behaviors, aggression and irritability. It has been reported that children with ASD have more problems with constipation than their typically developing peers.

Here are some strategies that may help alleviate constipation:

- Gradually introduce more fiber, fruits and veggies
- Introducing prune juice. The complex sugars in this juice cannot be absorbed by the intestine, this helps keep water in the bowel.
- Drink plenty of water
- Add more activity to the child's day.

Click [here](#) for a PDF guide on managing constipation in children by Autism Speaks.

## Movies about autism

With autism now affecting 1 and 68 children there is not only more talk about possible causes and services needed, but there are more movies and documentaries being made. Here are just a couple of the movies out there that can be found on Netflix:

1. **Fly Away** – A moving story about a single mother and the challenges she faces raising her autistic teenage daughter. Click [here](#) to watch the trailer on YouTube.
2. **The Story of Luke** – A comedy/drama about a young man with autism on a quest for a job and a girlfriend. Click [here](#) to watch the trailer.

## Upcoming Events

- Fundraiser February 13<sup>th</sup>
- Clinic Closed February 16<sup>th</sup>

Contact the OT department at (626) 449-2919, ext. 140