

## Meaningful Day Services

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# Meaningful Day Services *newsletter*

## *26 Years of Meaningful Experiences!*



Enjoying Indianapolis and  
having fun in the sun!

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# Parent Involvement in Occupational Therapy

Parents (or caregivers) play a significant role in Occupational Therapy evaluation and treatment. Parent input allows the Occupational Therapist to develop a treatment plan that fits not only the client's needs but also the family's environment, habits, and routines. It is important that throughout the entire treatment process, the parent and therapist work together to help the client reach their goals.

In many cases, the use of telehealth has significantly improved parent involvement. Therapists are able to observe the child in their natural environment, explain treatment strategies to parents who then facilitate the client's participation in activities, provide immediate feedback as the activity occurs, and problem-solve with the parent to determine how to move forward when strategies don't go as planned. Ideally, this collaboration model occurs with in-clinic sessions as well. OTs often share video clips or demonstrate therapy strategies to parents in order to maximize carry over of those strategies between sessions. This model has not only improved relationships between therapists and parents, but also between parents and their child. Parents are empowered, because they are learning strategies that positively impact their child's development.

Occupational therapy is not truly beneficial if the client is only able to be successful in the clinic or while working with their therapist. The goal of OT is to guide and support the client and all of their team in setting up environments, modifying activities, and improving skills so that they can be as independent and successful as possible throughout their day. If parents are implementing strategies on a consistent basis in the child's natural environment, they will be more likely to grow, learn, and live their most meaningful life.





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# Meet Garrik!

This month we would like to highlight Garrik from the children's after-school program at Brownsburg. Garrik has been attending the program for two years, but recently he has made amazing progress toward some of his goals. The pandemic has been hard on everyone, and mask wearing has become the new normal. However, it was not Garrik's favorite thing to wear on his face. We began to work with him on tolerating a face shield first, and he responded exceptionally well. Within three weeks, he tolerated the face shield for the entire time he spent in the facility. After a few weeks of wearing the face shield, Garrik began a mask desensitization protocol. Our staff worked diligently with him to establish a routine, and Garrik did a phenomenal job adjusting to this new normal. At first, he would only wear it for 5 minutes at a time while he enjoyed some videos on his iPad (his favorite way to relax), and then he would take it off and throw it down to the ground. Eventually, Garrik began to tolerate the mask for longer times each day and soon we noticed that he barely took it off his face and hardly needed reminders to put it back on! We are all so pleased with Garrik's progress in this area, but he has also progressed in other areas, as well!

Garrik has also been making steady progress in academics during his time in the after-school program! Garrik's favorite activities during the after-school program include going for walks outside, spending time watching his favorite videos, and playing with the exercise balls that we have at the facility. Lately, Garrik has been participating in many more academic activities than he has in the past. These activities include puzzles, life skills activities, painting, and drawing. Garrik has adapted well to these new challenges and we are so happy with the progress he has made, and we are excited to continue working with him!

**Keep up the great work Garrik!**



## Meet Kaniesha

We would like to highlight Behavior Consultant Kaniesha this month. Kaniesha started with us in August 2020, in the heart of the pandemic! She quickly learned the role of a behavior consultant and made telehealth work with new and existing clients. Kaniesha jumped in on our telehealth groups and has continued to play a key role in keeping those up and running for our clients. Kaniesha leads with a good attitude, puts clients first, and is ethical in her practice. Thank you, Kaniesha, for all your hard work!

*Thanks for all you do, Kaniesha!*



Be sure to view our website to stay informed on our protocols for safety measures for COVID-19.  
LINK: <http://meaningfuldays.com/resources/covid-19-alerts-and-notices/>



Follow us on Facebook: Meaningful Day Services or find us on Twitter: @MDSIndiana and Instagram at: Meaningful\_Day\_Services





# Make Mental Health a Priority

Mental health is important to any community and is especially relevant when providing and receiving care. Mental health should be prioritized for individuals with disabilities and their families/caretakers. It's important to remember that for a successful team, everyone must be pouring from a full cup.

- In 2018, 17.4 million adults with disabilities reported frequent mental distress
- Caregivers are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and depression than the average person, as well

Isolation, changed schedules, and less available services have put the mental health of everyone at a higher risk than average. Remember that it is okay to not be okay. If you feel something may be wrong, talk about it! We often push off signs of mental distress that include:

- Muscle tension
- Decreased energy or motivation
- Feelings of guilt
- Headaches
- Changes to sleep or eating habits

Stress and other mental health issues can affect anyone on a team, and it's important to be thinking about how to handle the situation if one should it arrive. There are also ways to help prevent issues from arising.

- Be aware of mental health options and treatment
- Take care of you emotional health
- Take a break from the news and current events if it becomes too stressful
- Take care of your body
- Connect with your community

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/features/mental-health-for-all.html>



**FREE**  
screening



**Reaching their potential**



**Meaningful  
Day Services**

[www.meaningfuldays.com](http://www.meaningfuldays.com)

Meaningful Day Services, Inc. (MDS) celebrates more than 27 years of helping individuals reach their potential with a dedicated team of highly skilled therapists. The MDS team is there to help families find the assistance they need for their child's specific needs, at whatever level possible, and to help them prepare for a lifetime of meaningful days.

**Call (317) 858-8630 for help.**

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