

# EPICENTER NEWS

JANUARY-MARCH 2009

## NEW Services Offered for Language-based Learning Disabilities

### The Link between Learning and Language

Strong language skills are a critical part of academic success. Some aspects of language are obvious in learning, such as talking about ideas. However, more subtle aspects of language are also involved in listening, reading, writing and even thinking about what we know.

Consider the sub-skills involved in reading. To be a proficient reader a student must possess strong phonemic awareness (discriminating the sounds within words), word attack strategies, phonics, sight word recognition and reading fluency. In addition to reading fluency, comprehension arises from identification of the relevant content of the reading, visualizing concepts and ultimately connecting these ideas to deeper themes. All of these "cognitive-linguistic" components must be in place to give rise to a successful reader.

Language skills are critically related to performance in all academic subjects, even those usually thought to be non-linguistic. For example, a student with high-level language struggles may experience difficulties in math. This stems from the emphasis in today's curriculums on mathematical relationships, word problems and group problem solving.

### Benefits of Speech-Language Pathology Services for Language-Based Learning Disabilities

Language-based learning disabilities are problems with age-appropriate reading, spelling, and/or writing. This disorder does not reflect how intelligent a person is. Most people diagnosed with learning disabilities have average to superior intelligence (source: [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)). Even subtle language problems can have dramatic effects on all aspects of academic success. This includes memory; social skills; and the ability to access, organize, interpret and express new information. **Amy Lincoln, Ph.D., CCC-SLP** is a speech-language pathologist who has recently joined the Epicenter team and specializes in language-based learning disabilities. Her focus is in assisting students who face challenges in any language-based aspect of learning. Her goal is to help each student achieve their best in communication and academic skills!



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Gross Motor Group** will be starting again on March 4th, and continue Wednesdays from 4:15 to 5:15. The course will be instructed by Nancy Harris, DPT. The cost is \$100 for the eight week session.



**Yoga Class** will be starting again this spring instructed by Holly Kassner, COTA. Class will be held on Mondays from 3:45-4:30 and will run for six weeks. The cost is \$75 dollars.



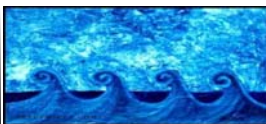
**Handwriting Group** starts March 26 and runs for six weeks. It will be held on Thursdays from 4-5 PM. The cost is \$100.00

Call Epicenter with any questions or if interested in signing up for either one of the classes!

## CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES ATTENDED

Sheri Simkins, PT , PCS, and Claire Adam, DPT attended the annual Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) of the APTA in Las Vegas, NV February 10-12th. They were able to attend numerous pediatric courses addressing power mobility, fitness for children with and without disabilities, sports injuries, and motor assessments of children with cerebral palsy and autism.

Christa Drab MS CCC-SLP recently attended a pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders course led by Krisi Brackett, MC, CCC-SLP which was a medical, motor, and behavioral approach. Pediatric feeding problems are challenging in that can be difficult to identify the specific areas that interfere with skill advancement for each child. Emphasis was placed on how feeding disorders develop, the basis for most feeding problems and what maintains them over time, how gastrointestinal disorders such as reflux, dysmotility and pain affect feeding in a child, as well as how to prioritize treatment and behavior techniques to improve acceptance of bites of food. The course had many case studies and Christa was able to take one of her patient's in for an evaluation and treatment plan. Christa has now completed over 250 hours of feeding and oral motor course work in the last three years.



## AQUATIC THERAPY

**Epicenter continues to offer aquatic therapy sessions weekly at the Ridge Athletic Club's warm pool.**

**Benefits of Aquatic Therapy Include:** improving range of motion, strengthening, improving coordination, increasing mobility, improving balance, increasing endurance and allowing kids to learn basic swimming and water safety skills.

Aquatic therapy is appropriate for children with a wide variety of diagnoses. Included in these are many different orthopedic (e.g. recovery from sports injuries or surgeries), developmental (delayed gross motor skills), and/or neurological diagnoses (e.g. cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, or traumatic brain injuries).

Please Call us if you have questions or would like more information about the aquatic therapy program.

## Spotlight



**Brock Stoddard**

is an 8th grader at Dillion Middle School in Dillion, MT. He has been chosen as our spotlight kid of the quarter. He has been coming to Epicenter for therapy 2 times per month since he was 5 years

old. He feels like therapy helps him with standing, stretching and he learned to walk here! His hobbies include: wrestling, hunting, fishing, hanging out with his friends, video games (playing Wii sports is his favorite) and swimming. He also loves to hunt deer and elk in the Bitterroot Valley. His goals are to graduate from high school and work with animals, such as with dogs in pet stores. He also is interested in becoming a therapist, so he could "teach people and have fun with them!" Thanks for all of your hard work Brock!

**OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE THE BEST FOR THE CHILDREN WHO NEED THE MOST**