

Winter 2022 Newsletter

CARD Odenton Quarterly Newsletter

We're excited to share with you the winter edition (December-January-February) of the quarterly newsletter for the Center for Autism and Related Disorders' Odenton team. In this newsletter, read about resources to support you in engaging your child during the winter months, and learn more about our staff members who work at Odenton. We continue to work with Kennedy Krieger's Infection Control and Employee Health team to ensure our spaces are safe for your child and you. We want to thank you for your flexibility and collaboration during the different changes that occurred in the winter months. Your support helps ensure that our site continues to provide on-site and remote services.

- On page 1, occupational therapist Kristen Furnari shares strategies for engaging children through fun activities during the winter.
- On pages 2–5, we spotlight staff members who are new to our team, and those who have been supporting us over the years.

We hope you enjoy any snow these last few weeks of winter may bring us, and that you continue to celebrate the many milestones your child is making.

Biji Philip, PhD, CCC-SLP
Site Clinical Director



Winter Fine Motor Activities

Fine motor skills involve the use of the smaller muscles in the hands. We use fine motor skills every day for tasks like zipping our jackets, baking cookies, brushing our teeth and completing homework. While spending time inside this winter, here are some fun fine motor activities to do with your child:

- Make a gingerbread house. Work on squeezing the icing and adding small candies on top of the roof. [Gingerbread House Link](#)
- Decorate winter cookies. Spread and squeeze icing or shake sprinkles on top.
- Break apart cotton balls and make a snowperson or polar bear craft.
- Crumble pieces of paper to make snowballs. Have a snowball fight inside!
- Put water and food coloring in a spray bottle. Have your children spray snow or shaving cream and watch it change colors.
- Freeze small figurines or Pompoms in ice cubes. Have your child hammer each toy out of the ice and get the treasure! [Pompoms Ice Cube Activity Link](#)
- Make frozen foam dough out of corn starch and shaving cream. [Literacy and Foam Activity Link](#)
- Cut out paper snowflakes or make paper chains; decorate by coloring or adding fun stickers.
- Decorate clothespins to be snowpeople. Have your child clip their snowperson onto different items to bring them around with them (i.e., place it on their backpack, binder, cup).
- Put salt in a cookie tray and have your child “draw” in the snow.
- Have your child help out in the kitchen with scooping, pouring, stirring and more to get your child involved during meal preparation!
- Use tongs to pick up cotton balls and make a snowball fort.



Kristen Furnari, MS, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist

Staff Spotlight Corner



Liza Shourds has been a therapeutic assistant at CARD Odenton since September 2021. She is currently a transfer studies student at Anne Arundel Community College and is hoping to transfer to the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program at Towson University in the fall of 2022.

Liza has always enjoyed working with children, whether it be through babysitting or tutoring, and she is looking forward to developing her skills at Kennedy Krieger Institute as she finishes her education. In the classroom, she works with speech-language pathologists by organizing classroom materials and creating class art projects.

Liza lives in Anne Arundel County and enjoys spending time with friends, playing video games, and even working as a server on the weekends. She loves reading, singing, acting and watching television with her friends.

Staff Spotlight Corner



Lucas Shafer is the new COVID-19 safety auditor for CARD Odenton. He recently received his Bachelor of Science degree in economics and business administration from Towson University. Lucas started his career at Kennedy Krieger Institute in 2017 as a classroom assistant for the LEAP (Lifeskills and Education for Students with Autism and Other Pervasive Behavioral Challenges) Program before transitioning to the behavior resource team at Kennedy Krieger Institute's Fairmount Campus lower/middle school in 2018. He is excited to be joining the CARD family and to continue helping staff members and patients stay safe during the pandemic.

As part of his role, Lucas will be conducting COVID-19 screenings of patients when they arrive on-site, as well as daily safety audits to ensure proper utilization of personal protective equipment and sanitation standards by staff members. This will maximize patient and staff safety and morale throughout the process.

Outside of Kennedy Krieger, Lucas is a musician and educator. He is the current battery coordinator for the Skyliners Drum and Bugle Corps, based in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and consults with multiple high school band programs across Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Lucas has also performed with Grammy Award-winning artists Andra Day and Buckcherry, in addition to being welcomed as a guest performer for Towson University's Percussion Ensemble. In his spare time, he enjoys playing drums, cooking and playing video games.

Staff Spotlight Corner



Emily Ammann, MS, OTR/L, is an occupational therapist who has been working with families at Kennedy Krieger Institute since 2008. She received her undergraduate degree at the University of Georgia in exercise science and her graduate degree at Colorado State University in occupational therapy before moving to Baltimore to begin her career at Kennedy Krieger.

In 2016, Emily transitioned from the Institute's outpatient Occupational Therapy Department to CARD. She believes every patient and family contributes something unique to the therapeutic space (and to the world). She enjoys collaborating with patients for growth in areas that are meaningful to them, and strives to hone her skills in neurodiversity-affirming approaches. She finds playful activities to be the most impactful in strengthening the development of fine and gross motor skills, visual motor integration, sensory motor/processing, and self-care skills, and uses creative problem-solving to support each patient at their ability level. Emily is grateful for every opportunity to meet and work with a child and their family.

Emily resides on the Eastern Shore with her two children and two dogs. She enjoys leading a weekly virtual book club, listening to podcasts and creating new traditions with her friends and family.

Staff Spotlight Corner



Patrice Casamichana is an administrative services coordinator for CARD Odenton. She began at Kennedy Krieger Institute by supporting our founder, Dr. Rebecca Landa, and our clinical director. She is a graduate of Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and began her career as a credentialing auditor at one of the nation's leading managed vision care companies, where she worked for more than 10 years. When she was ready for a career change, she discovered a position in administrative services. She loves having a different day, every day! She loves working for Kennedy Krieger because it encourages growth and learning, and because the possibilities for what one can accomplish at the Institute seem endless.

Patrice lives in Baltimore with her husband and 8-year-old son. She enjoys exploring Maryland's many state parks, taking hikes, listening to audiobooks and spending time with her family. She loves to travel, especially anywhere with a beach.