

## **INFORMATION LETTER**

### **Partnering for Change**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

At Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, we believe that we are called to create a Catholic learning and working environment that is safe, caring, inclusive, and welcoming. Together with Central West Community Care Access Centre (CW CCAC), the Dufferin-Peel community is continuing with a model of support for students that began last year in some schools. The integrated occupational therapist (OT) model of support was developed and studied by *CanChild*, a research centre at McMaster University. This model provides educational opportunities for our teachers to learn more about how children develop motor skills and how they can promote motor skill development through classroom activities. In this model, the OT works in the school with select students. She assists teachers, where appropriate, in learning more about motor development in all children and how to help children who may be having difficulty with some motor skills.

OTs are health professionals who work with children in many different settings and who have an expertise in fine and gross motor skill development. Fine motor skills are related to tasks such as printing and writing, cutting with scissors, opening juice boxes and doing up zippers. Gross motor skills include activities like jumping, getting onto the school bus, climbing stairs and running.

As you may know, the school has a team of staff (resource teachers, support staff) who work with educators to help students achieve their greatest potential. The OT will be part of the school team process and will be in the school on a scheduled basis. She will spend time in our classrooms, gym, and playground. She will observe children and work with school staff to offer instructional methods that may make it easier for children to learn and engage in motor-based activities. If the OT feels that your child is continuing to have difficulty learning new motor skills, more than is typical for his/her age, she or another member of the school team will contact you.

The OT will be spending much of his/her time in kindergarten and primary classrooms supporting the many activities children do at this age to help develop their motor skills. The OT will be working at the school with the broader school team and will be available to teachers to provide support as needed. She/he will work with teachers to share useful information and ideas that support student learning. Educational sessions will be offered for parents as well – watch our school newsletter for details.

We hope that you will introduce yourself to the OT when you are in the school to attend a parent function or to visit your child's classroom. If you have concerns about your child's ability to do motor-based activities at home, feel free to let the OT know. If you have any questions about this project, please talk with your child's principal. You may also contact Susan Wynes at CW CCAC, at 905-796-0040 ext. 2333.

---

#### **LOVING LEARNING AND LEADING**

We believe that each one, created in the image and likeness of God, is called by name into the Dufferin-Peel community, to realize the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations to the fullest extent possible as we all journey from the early years to vocation.

*"Each one called by name" (Isaiah 43:1)*

October 2015