

Time for a Chat!

It's Chatterbox Australia Therapy Services Newsletter!



Stage 4 Restrictions in Vic

WHAT ABOUT THERAPY SERVICES?

Due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Victoria, the State Government announced Stage 4 Restrictions in Metro Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire.

Restrictions for Allied Health Practitioners (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, social workers, dieticians and audiologists) now apply for providing in-clinic appointments. Face to face appointments can only be given if services are necessary to prevent significant clinical deterioration. Practitioners are encouraged to use Telehealth wherever possible.

In response to this, Chatterbox Australia Therapy Services has now transitioned back to online therapy for its clients and for group programs. In order to further support our children during this lockdown period, our therapy & creative arts teams have joined forces to develop a variety of different groups to suit different age ranges and development. These groups have been designed to offer as many learning opportunities for your children and teens as well as trying to promote them using social skills.

If your child is struggling with; focusing during online sessions, stress and/or anxiety then please speak to your therapist. Chatterbox plans to return to the clinic setting once Melbourne is back in Stage 3 restrictions.

For all of our updates and program information, please visit www.chatterboxats.com and our Facebook page

In this issue, we talk about:

**BEING A STUDENT DURING
LOCKDOWN - 2**

**SENSORY ACTIVITIES AT
HOME - 3**

Meet Our OT Student!

MY EXPERIENCE BEING A STUDENT DURING STAGE 4 RESTRICTIONS

My name is Jasmine Libro and I am a third-year occupational therapy student currently doing my placement at Chatterbox. During these unprecedented times, I have been lucky enough to gain clinical experience in both Teletherapy and face-to-face sessions with the children from this clinic.

I have only been using Teletherapy for only about one week now and I am already loving the experience. At first, I didn't know what to expect from it and always wondered how therapy could possibly work online.

However, even though at times been challenging, it has been amazing seeing how the children interact with the online activities and how patient they are with the online system. It has been really rewarding seeing how Teletherapy is still allowing the children to have access to therapy and giving them the opportunity to learn and grow during the uncertainty that surrounds us in our current lives.

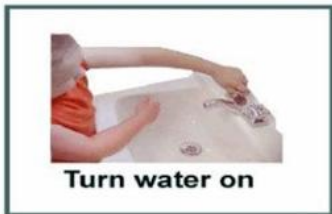
I feel like I have gotten the hang of Teletherapy relatively quickly considering I had never done it before. The platform that Chatterbox uses is called 'Coviu', Coviu is easy to navigate around and I was amazed by the resources it has, such as the whiteboard and the ability to share your screen to play interactive activities.

It has been fulfilling seeing how resilient the children have been by adapting to online learning and still willing to participate in the therapy based tasks. Some activities that I have enjoyed using with the children in their sessions are tic-tac-toe, memory match, scavenger hunt and hangman.

As a student, I believe my experience with Teletherapy has opened doors for my future studies by providing me with more resources and skills to use as an occupational therapist. I am excited to see how this platform can develop and where it can take therapy in the future.

Jasmine Libro
3rd Year OT Student

Hand Washing Visuals for Kids



Sensory Activities at Home!

OUR OT STUDENT JASMINE AND OUR SENIOR OT SHIREEN SHARE SOME GREAT IDEAS FOR EASY SENSORY ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME!

Engaging children in sensory activities is beneficial in several ways. It can help with improving social skills such as communication and cooperation, coordination, fine and gross motor skills, as well as being able to calm children down. A range of activities can be used to stimulate all the five senses – touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing, and it is important to gently evaluate what works well with your child. Examples below:



Floor-time Play

Floor-time Play is not just about having fun with your child in play, it's about having fun together! Sit down on the floor in a calm environment with your child and engage them through activities that they enjoy and find motivating. Some activities in floor-time can include blowing bubbles or balloons, tickles or hugs and singing nursery rhymes with sensory input such as rocking back and forth. Singing some nursery rhymes is also a great and fun way to strengthen your child's engagement. Some of our young ones really love physical contact, so gently wrapping your arms around them as you sing or move, swaying or rocking to the beat can be quite relaxing for some of our kids.

Sensory Treasure Hunt

Grab a household item you can fill up (e.g. box, bowl, crate etc.), and fill it up with either rice, water or sand. Hide the different items inside, such as toys, plastic utensils, outdoor items like a leaf etc., and get your child to search for the hidden "treasures" within the tub. You can even make a sheet with the items they need to find (pictures or words), and get them to tick it off as they go! To make it a bit more challenging, you can add in a timer also!



Using an Exercise Ball

Exercise balls are a great tool to use for many activities and are a great way to stimulate sensory motor input, for example, through stomach-based activities. An activity that can be done with your child is placing two containers half to 1 metre apart. Get your child to roller over the ball, and while balancing their weight on their arms, they can move the items from one basket to the other. This is great for balance, sensory input, body coordination and hand-eye coordination.



Make Different Sensory Bottles

Fill an old bottle with a mix of water, glitter and a few drops of food colouring to create an eye-catching toy for your child. Drop in a few buttons or marbles and then seal the lid tightly using a glue gun. This activity is a really simple way to help your child learn to engage and stay focused. You can also fill your bottles with rocks, pasta, beads, rice, or even old bottle top lids!



Stage 4 Lockdown Programs

Creative Arts
ACADEMY
at ChatterBox



Creative Arts
ACADEMY
Art Therapy



Our wonderful art therapist- Tiff, has developed two programs for our Chatterbox kids & teens to participant in during lockdown. Art therapy is a fantastic and fun way to target therapy goals. It is particularly useful to develop emotional regulation and help with stress and anxiety. Given how difficult this lockdown period is for everyone, being able to engage in an activity like art therapy can help to ease anxiousness.

Tiff held her first online art therapy session for the C.R.E.A.T.E program last Thursday. Tiff said that she loved every minute and especially loved seeing the joy and fun the kids were having!

Tiff has also created the Learn to Draw individual program. These sessions are perfect for our older children and teens.

Do you have an art lover?! Book now by emailing arttherapy@chatterboxats.com



Creative Arts
ACADEMY
Music Therapy



We recently welcomed Felicia Murnane to our team as our Music Therapist. Felicia is highly trained in providing therapy to both children and adults. Felicia's sessions are fun and highly interactive. She plays the piano and guitar, sings and introduces instruments for her children to use.

Felicia is planning to see individual clients and also run some fun groups when we are back in the clinic.

During this lockdown period, Felicia is able to see new clients online.

Do you have a music lover?! Book now by emailing info@chatterboxats.com or call our reception staff on 94672642



Creative Arts
ACADEMY
Dance



Janelle from Melbourne Dance Theatre (MDT) is back during this lockdown period to provide Move It! dance classes for our kinder, primary and high school kids!

We know that lots of extra curricular activities have been cancelled, especially sports. This makes being active difficult for our children stuck in the house at the moment. These dance classes will allow your child or teen to get some exercise as well as learning dance technique.

How is a Move It! dance class different? Our Move It! classes not only provide dance and exercise but they also include an important social element. Our therapy team at Chatterbox have joined forces with MDT to create a dance program that also teaches and promotes social skills. During these class, children and teens learn to work in a group, practise attention and listening skills, practice turn taking and waiting patiently, build friendship and more.

Do you have a dance lover?! Book now by emailing info@chatterboxats.com or call our reception staff on 94672642



Stage 4 Lockdown Programs

C.R.E.A.T.E 5 WEEK ONLINE ART THERAPY GROUP



Join Tiff (our Art Therapist) for FIVE Fun and Creative Art Projects.

- Week 1: Decorate your own journal companion
- Week 2: Painting/Drawing to sounds
- Week 3: My favourite animal
- Week 4: Mandala collage
- Week 5: Superheroes



Art Therapy is used to complement a child's usual therapy. It is known to help manage behaviour, reduce stress & anxiety, understanding emotions, encourage attention and listening skills and build confidence in a fun and relaxed environment.

DETAILS:

- An Art Pack will be delivered to your child with all the materials they need to participate in the weekly group session.
- These packs are \$50 each (including postage) PLUS 1 hour session \$64.66 (NDIS APPLICABLE)
- Thursdays (starting 13th August). Tiff will hold an ONLINE SESSION and work with your child to complete the activity.
- No more than 4 kids per group.
- Three Age Levels:
 1. Kinder-Grade 1
 2. Grade 3-4
 3. Grade 5-6
- Limited packs available. Please order ASAP to allow earliest shipping.

Please email melissa@chatterboxats.com to ORDER your pack and book in a time.



Creative Arts ACADEMY at ChatterBox



LEARN TO DRAW!

Individual drawing sessions



Our Learn to Draw sessions have been created to allow art lovers to recognise their own creative style and strengths with art activities that are enjoyable and stress-free!

Our Art Therapist Tiff, will guide your child as they explore their creativity and experiment with various drawing tools and different techniques. Skills focused on include joint attention, building confidence, asking for help, dealing with 'mistakes', regulating and controlling emotions and developing resilience, all while being in a safe and nurturing environment.

Sessions are currently available online while we are in lockdown and then in our Bundoora clinic.

NDIS applicable
Email arttherapy@chatterboxats.com
to book and for prices
Suitable for ages 8yrs - 18years!



ONLINE DANCE GROUP

4 week program



DOES YOUR CHILD LOVE TO DANCE?
OUR 4 WEEK ONLINE DANCE GROUP IS
THE BEST WAY TO DEVELOP SOCIAL
SKILLS AND EXERCISE
WHILE HAVING A BLAST!

MONDAYS (17th August - 7th September)

Ages 4 -6yrs 1pm - 2pm
Ages 7-12yrs. 2pm - 3pm
Ages 13+ 3pm - 4pm

For prices and details please email
melissa@chatterboxats.com

WELCOME TO OUR MUSIC THERAPIST Felicia Murnane



Since graduating from her Graduate Diploma of Music Therapy in 2006, Felicia has had extensive experience in the fields of Early Intervention, Special Education and Adult and Child Disability. Music Therapy is incredibly effective in treating children, teens and adults with a range of developmental difficulties, disorder and/or medical conditions.

Evidence has shown that it can help improve social behaviours, increase focus and attention, increase communication attempts (vocalisations, verbalisations, gestures, and vocabulary), reduce anxiety, and improve body awareness and coordination. Music Therapy activities include:

- Movement to music
- Listening to music
- Singing
- Improvisation
- Song-writing
- Instrument playing



To book an online appointment
call reception **94672642**
or email
info@chatterboxats.com
NDIS applicable

Stage 4 Lockdown Programs



Our Senior Speech Pathologist and Director Mel, together with our Drama teacher Emma were delighted to restart the Jnr and Teens Girlfriend and Mates social skill programs, online last week! These five week programs has been created to work in an online therapy environment. The children and teens have one hour with Mel where traditional social skill therapy is provided, followed by one hour with Emma participating in drama games and activities.

Mel and Emma 's goals were to make these groups functional. They wanted to work on areas that have been impacted on as a result of bring in strict restrictions since early 2020. Last week 's group goals focused on getting the children and teens to sit well, looking into the camera, using a clear voice, learning how to look at the screen as different people spoke, listening and attending to instructions and lastly getting used to speaking to other children in the group. All of these skills are essential at the moment as they are needed for online school sessions.

Other goals included encouraging the students to ask their peers different questions in order to learn more about each other. We also discussed having similar interest's and how this could help set up a game or an activity. Having conversations and asking questions are crucial in every day life and at the moment during these long periods of lockdown and isolation from people outside of our family it is essential that we help our children maintain these skills. Especially for children that are having difficulties with confidence or initiating friendship or even asking a teacher for help – having such a long break from conversation opportunities can really set them back when they return to school.

Interested? There is still time for parents to book their children or teens in! Please email melissa@chatterboxats.com or contact reception



Jnr Girlfriends & Mates Social Groups

Dear Parents,

Due to Stage 4 Restrictions we are not able to run this social group in the clinic, therefore it will be held ONLINE from Tuesday the 11th of August from 3-5pm.

Students will receive the usual one hour social skills with Mel and one hour of drama with Emma.

If you are interested please contact reception on 94672642 ASAP to confirm your booking.



TEENS Girlfriends & Mates Social Groups

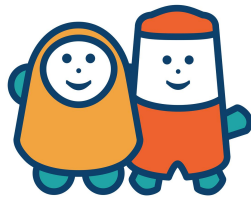
Dear Parents,

Due to Stage 4 Restrictions we are not able to run this social group in the clinic, therefore it will be held ONLINE from Friday the 7th of August from 3-5pm.

Students will receive the usual one hour social skills with Mel and one hour of drama with Emma.

If you are interested please contact reception on 94672642 ASAP to confirm your booking.





PREPARE IS A THERAPY BASED PRE-PREP PROGRAM. IT IS DESIGNED TO GET CHILDREN PREPARED FOR THE START OF THEIR PRIMARY SCHOOL YEARS.

The current global pandemic COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on all of us. It has impacted significantly on children being within a learning environment and for children with additional needs – it has impacted their therapy and progress significantly.

Our therapy team are most concerned for kinder children who are heading into Prep in 2021. This year is crucial for a child because, not only does it build up the skills needed to succeed in a Prep class but it gives children the tools needed to transition positively into Primary School.

As a response, Chatterbox increased the number of days Prepare runs from two days a week to four days a week. Despite stage 4 restrictions, the therapists running Prepare have been committed to providing their students with continued care via individual session and home programs. The therapists are also creating some group activities for each class to do together online.

There are very limited spaces (no more than 2) left for enrolment in Prepare for Term 4. If you have a child commencing Prep in 2021 and you are concerned with how they will transition and cope, please get in touch with us and book them in for Term 4.

To book please email our Prepare Coordinator - Lisa Guerra on lisa@chatterboxats.com or phone and Lisa will guide you through the enrollment procedure.

"5 stars [Prepare] being the best thing I did for my daughter b4 starting school highly recommended"



PREPARE | Class of 2022

Since the start of 2015 we have watched nearly 140 children in our Pre-pre program 'Prepare' flourish and develop skills crucial for a positive headstart into their primary school year. In 2021, four Prepare classes will be running. Our team has created an incredible curriculum that accelerates learning in a fun and safe environment.

Prepare models a Pre-Prep program with the ultimate goal of giving all the skills needed; both socially and academically to ensure a positive and well-planned Prep transition. We have had around 100 students enrolled over the years and the growth seen by the end of the year is amazing! We have also managed to transition all of our Prepare children in a positive and stress-free way into the school setting by liaising with the school and teacher.

The main goal of the Prepare Program is to provide opportunities for children with additional needs to develop into confident, competent learners. Additionally, to provide consistent communication and goals across all of students learning environments (kinder, childcare, recreational activities and even with family members). The final and most important part of the program is to ensure a comprehensive transition to their school (mainstream or specialised setting).

CLASS of 2021

INTERESTED?

FIND MORE INFORMATION
REGARDING PREPARE
ON OUR WEBSITE

www.chatterboxats.com

To book an introductory (free)
session please email
lisa@chatterboxats.com

