

THE ZENITH STAR

SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Back to School Edition

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BACK TO SCHOOL MEANS...

- Changes in schedules/routines
- Meeting new teachers/peers
- Learning new things every day
- Managing new responsibilities

This can be stressful for kids and caregivers alike! Many children have difficulty adjusting to these changes, and may need extra help when learning new skills related to fine/gross motor skills, emotional regulation, cognitive skills, and learning how to play/communicate with others. That's where our therapy team can help!



WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Here are some strategies that can help kids and caregivers adjust to new routines, and increase emotional wellbeing for you both.

- Incorporate daily moments of connection with your child such as having dinner together, reading books together, or playing a game.
- Establish a predictable routine that is easy for kids to remember.
- Use timers/give a countdown to help your child prepare for transitions.
- For sensory seekers, having a few minutes to jump, swing, or crawl after school can help with regulation. For sensory avoiders, having dim lighting or using a weighted blanket can be beneficial.
- Reduce screentime as bedtime approaches.



If your child has a disability and you feel they need extra support in addition to outpatient services, they may qualify for a 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through their school. Remember, you know your child best!



Talk to your school team to see if your child is eligible for a 504 Plan or IEP. Processes may vary in different schools/districts.



A 504 Plan offers accommodations to the environment such as permission to use noise-cancelling headphones, note-taking support, or more frequent breaks. An IEP offers accommodations and modifications to assignments or the curriculum based on your child's needs.



Both are legal documents that follow your child through their time in school and are offered at no cost to parents.

Starting a new school year may also be a time when parents and teachers can identify possible language delays. A language delay could be the reason some children struggle more in the new school year.

Alyssa DeRoos, part of the speech team here at Zenith Rehabilitation, offers the following guidance for identifying signs of a receptive vs. an expressive language delay.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE (HOW WELL A CHILD UNDERSTANDS AND REMEMBERS WHAT IS SAID TO THEM)

- Difficulty answering questions
- Prefers independent play vs cooperative play
- Not showing interest in books
- Needing a lot of repetition to remember information
- Difficulty following directions that have two or more steps (ex: Take off your shoes and put them in the cabinet)

VS

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE (WHAT THE CHILD CAN SAY AND HOW IT IS SAID)

- Trouble retelling a story or events from their day.
- Difficulty using plurals, past tense, or pronouns in sentences.
- Using generic or non-specific words like “this” or “that” to label or request items.
- Preferring to use gestures or non-vocal communication (pointing to what they want instead of verbally stating it)

WHAT’S NEW AT ZENITH REHABILITATION?

Recently, we welcomed two new team members! Here is a bit about them.



MARI JACOBY, COTA/L (OT TEAM)

Mari graduated from Metropolitan Community College in May of 2025 and started at Zenith Rehabilitation as an Occupational Therapy Assistant in July. They previously worked as a nanny and a preschool teacher and are excited to work with the families here and learn from other therapists. They believe that neurodiversity-affirming care is important for everyone because different ways of thinking can help us all use our strengths to our advantage.

ELANA MOYE, SLP-CF (SPEECH TEAM)

You may recognize Miss Elana if you’ve been coming here for a while, and we are so excited to have her back! Prior to grad school, Elana was a preschool teacher for 12 years. She graduated from UCM in December of 2024 with her Master’s in Speech Language Pathology. She is excited to get to know and grow with the families we serve. Her personal philosophy is that learning together prepares us for tomorrow’s challenges!



LOCAL EVENTS THIS MONTH

The Deaf Cultural Festival

The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
Saturday, September 13th, 2025
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

This free event celebrates the unique culture of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Come enjoy live performances, storytelling, artmaking workshops, and other activities that will be fun for all ages!



Kansas City Community Gardens' Fall Family Festival

6917 Kensington Ave, Kansas City, MO
Saturday, September 20th, 2025
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

This free event at the Beanstalk Children's Garden will have all kinds of activities for the family including fruit and veggie tasting, handmade peanut butter demos, cider press demos and samples, garden crafts, bug exhibits, hand painting, yard games, a scavenger hunt, free basil plants, and more!



Kansas City Huddle on Fox 4

Zenith Rehabilitation is a proud sponsor of the Kansas City Huddle, an interview show for all things Chiefs. Our staff members will have the chance to come to live tapings of the show and meet the players they interview throughout the season. Check out our Facebook page for photos from these events, and catch the show on Thursday nights on Fox 4 KC.

