



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders OAFCCD

Growing Up – Social-Emotional Development and Communication Disorders

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Dr. Kokai spoke at the OAFCCD 2003 Annual Conference about her role as a Psychologist with the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the programs for children with hearing impairments. In her presentation, Dr. Kokai identified some of the impacts that a child's communication disorder may have on their understanding of the environment and the behaviour of others, as well as on their own ability to learn appropriate social behaviour. The outcome may be a child that is frustrated and acts out, or one that withdraws or is over anxious. Some children with communication disorders are unable to recognize or read non-verbal cues such as body language or facial expression.

Dr. Kokai provided some tips for parents on how they can help their child with a communication disorder to understand, predict and respond to the social environment. She suggested that parents need to provide structure, routine and consistency to provide a stable environment for the child. Parents need to set rules and limits and enforce them consistently. Ensuring that the children have a clear understanding of the behavioural expectations and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour is crucial.

Children with communication disorders often have difficulty learning appropriate social skills just by observing others, and parents may need to teach these skills directly. This means demonstrating the social skill, and giving the child lots of opportunities to practice. It is also important that parents model the behaviour and provide praise when the child is successful. When the child misbehaves the parents should stop and consider whether or not the child understood the expectations, and whether or not he/she possesses the necessary skills to behave appropriately. Dr. Kokai provided the following resource list for parents and professionals:

Resource List:

Videos:

“When the Chips are Down....Strategies for Improving Children’s Behavior, Learning Disabilities and Discipline”, with Richard Lavoie, PBS Video, 1997

“Last One Picked, First One Picked On: Social Implications of Learning Disabilities” with Richard Lavoie.

“Secrets of Discipline: 12 Keys to Raising Responsible Children” for parents and teachers by Ronald G. Morrish, OMNI Media Productions, 1997

Books:

Bullying and Victimization. Prevention and Intervention (by the Psychology Department, Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board, MTSSB 1998

Home time, Activities to Support Kindergarten Children at Home, Program Services/Special Services Divisions, Toronto Catholic District School Board

Skill streaming in Early Childhood: Teaching Pro-social Skills to the Preschool and Kindergarten Child, Ellen McGinnis & Arnold P. Goldstein Research Press Company, 1990

Skill streaming the Elementary School Child: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills, Ellen McGinnis & Arnold P. Goldstein, Research Press Company, 1997

Skill streaming the Adolescent: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills, Ellen McGinnis & Arnold P. Goldstein, Research Press Company, 1997

Teaching Social Skills to Hearing Impaired Students, by Patrick J. Schloss & Maureen A. Smith, A.G. Bell Association for the Deaf, 1990

Teaching Your Child the Language of Social Success, by Marshall P. Duke, Stephan Nowicki, JR. & Elizabeth A. Martin, 1996

Keeping a Head in School, a Student’s Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders, by Mel Levine, Educators Publishing Service, 1990

Source: Maria Kokai-Czapar, Psychology Department, Toronto Catholic District School Board
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