



# Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders OAFCCD

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## The Parent Role in the Speech-Language Pathology Assessment

- 1. Trust your instincts!!** Parents that are concerned about their child's speech or language development are usually right, and are often the first person to recognize the problem.
- 2. Find out about how to get speech and language services.**  
*If your child has not started school*, contact the local Preschool Speech and Language Program (check the OAFCCD Website for contact information) or the local health unit.  
*If your child attends school*, talk to the teacher. The classroom teacher can make the connections for referral for speech and language services.
- 3. Get your child's hearing tested.** In Ontario all new born babies have been screened for hearing loss since 2004. However, children may develop hearing loss as a result of a trauma or illness. If you suspect a hearing problem, it is important to find out whether the speech or language problems are related to hearing loss. Screening for hearing loss may be done by the local health unit, however, to get a complete assessment ask your family doctor for a referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist or an Audiologist.
- 4. Provide a history of your child's speech and language development.** Parents may wish to bring baby books or other records of developmental milestones to help them in filling out checklists and ratings. Their knowledge of the child's understanding of language, as well as his or her speech and language production, is an essential part of the assessment.
- 5. Provide informed consent.** Formal testing of your child may require your consent. If you are asked to sign a **Consent Form**, make sure that you understand the purpose of the test, what will be involved for your child and how the information will be used or shared. If additional information is required from other agencies or professionals, you may also be asked to sign **Consent for Sharing or Releasing Information**. Make sure that you understand what information is being requested and how the information will help.
- 6. Find out what will be included in the assessment.** A speech language assessment may include a parent interview, an oral-motor exam, testing of both receptive (listening) and expressive (speaking)

vocabulary and syntax, and assessment of speech (sound production), voice, and fluency. Depending on the age of the child the SLP may use checklists or complete formal testing, as well as observations of the child.

7. **Prepare your child and attend the assessment, if appropriate.** Depending on the age of the child you may be asked to attend or observe the session. Your observations and input will help the SLP to be sure the session is an accurate reflection of the child's abilities. It is important to prepare your child for the testing by telling them what will happen and who will be involved. You want your child to be comfortable and willing to complete the tasks.
8. **Meet with the SLP to get the results.** The SLP will prepare a written report with the results of the assessment. It is best to meet with the SLP in person and discuss the results. Ask questions to make sure that you understand all of the information. Make sure you understand the recommendations or programming suggestions.
9. **Make sure there is a plan to use the assessment information.** Find out how the information will be used to help your child. It may be necessary to have a case conference or meeting with the child care staff or classroom teacher to discuss the program plan. There may be other professionals with whom you want to share the assessment results with.
10. **Monitor your child's progress.** Work with the SLP and your child's child care staff or classroom teacher to implement the program plan. Help your child at home by working on their speech skills or activities that have been suggested. If your child is making progress share the news. If you have concerns talk to the staff or teacher. Keep working together to support your child's progress.
11. **Consider the need for a re-assessment or other types of assessment.** Your child's needs may change over time as social and academic expectations increase. If you don't think the current program plan is working ask to have your child's speech and language skills re-assessed. In some cases, a problem with speech or language development may be a sign of other problems, including a Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or a Developmental Disability. You, or the staff who interact with your child, may identify the need for other types of educational or psychological assessments. If another type of assessment is required make sure you understand the purpose of the assessment and what will be involved. Consider the same steps as for a speech and language assessment.
12. **Evaluate the process.** Many agencies and school boards provide opportunities for feedback through program surveys or comment sections on reports. Make notes of things you liked about the process or that could be improved. We all have a responsibility to support quality improvement efforts.

For more information on the qualifications of a Speech-Language Pathologist and the professional expectations see:

***Practice Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment of Children by Speech-Language Pathologists*** (March 2008) of the **College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists of Ontario (CASLPO)** at:

**CASLPO**, 5060-3080 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4N 3N1

Phone: 416-975-5347 1- 800-993-9459 Fax: 416-975-8394

Also available on the CASLPO Website at: <http://www.caslpo.com/>

OR: **Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists (OSLA)** at  
410 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2G6

Phone: (416) 920-3676 Outside the GTA, call Toll-Free: 1 (800) 718-6752

Fax: (416) 920-6214 Website: <http://www.osla.on.ca/>

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