



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders OAFCCD

From Talking to Literacy: Building Language Skills for Reading

*Ginny Marx, Speech-Language Pathologist, and Karen Rolston, Teacher,
Kindergarten Language Program, Toronto Catholic District School Board*

Ginny and Karen provided an overview of the Kindergarten Language Program, and presented strategies and resources for parents to develop language and literacy skills at home with their children.

Karen and Ginny began the session by describing the Kindergarten Language Program (KLP) is an early language intervention program in the Toronto Catholic District School Board that provides intensive support for children who have language and speech delays. The KLP targets Senior Kindergarten children, who attend the program in groups of eight for two half days per week in addition to the regular half day kindergarten program. Ginny and Karen co-instruct students at one of the KLP locations, and work as a teacher and speech-language pathology team. The focus of the program is the development of oral language as the foundation for literacy skills, including reading. Language and literacy skills are developed through thematic, play-based activities. The program, which has been in existence since 1996, includes a research component. Research was presented that indicates that students who have attended the KLP have shown significant improvement in language and literacy skills through standardized assessment. Parents and teachers who are surveyed about the program report that they have noticed significant improvements in oral language skills as a result of the program.

The video **Let's Talk about Phonological Awareness**, developed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board, was shared with workshop participants. This video provides information about the development of phonological awareness skills and shows students in the Kindergarten Language Program engaged in a variety of activities to develop phonological awareness skills. Research indicates that phonological awareness skills, such as being aware of syllables in words, rhyming, and segmenting and blending sounds into words, are important to the development of literacy skills. Children find these activities to be enjoyable and they can also be adapted for home use. Workshop participants engaged in a number of hands-on phonological awareness activities, which were provided to take home. A package of resources was also provided to workshop participants. The following are some suggested resources to develop phonological awareness:

Video:

Let's Talk About Phonological Awareness. Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2001

Resources:

Books are for Talking Too!, Gerbers, Jane, Publisher Pro-Ed, available through Psycan, 1-800-263-3558

Take Home Phonological Awareness, Robertson, C. and Salter, S., Publisher, Lingui Systems, 1-800-776-4332, ISBN 0-7606-0331-6

The Source for Early Literacy Development, Crowe, L. and Reichmuth, S., publisher LinguiSystems, 1-800-776-4332, ISBN 0-7606-0331-6

Sourcebook of Phonological Activities: Children's Classic Literature, Goldsworthy, C. Singular Publishing Group, Inc. 1-800-7320-2214, ISBN 1-56593-7977-X

Making Words: Multilevel, Hands-ON, Developmentally Appropriate Spelling and Phonics Activities, Cunningham, P., and Hall, P. publisher Good Apple, 23740 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, California, ISBN 0-86653-806-2

Sounds Abound: Storybook Activities, Lachance, S, Publisher Lingui Systems, 1-800-776-4332, ISBN 0-7606-0413-4

Oral Language Resource Book, Researched and developed by Education Department of Western Australia, Irwin Publishing, Toronto, ISBN 0-325-00080-8

Phonemic Awareness Songs and Rhymes, (Series of Four, Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer) Jordano, K. and Callella, T., publisher Creative Teaching Press, Inc. Cypress, California, 90630, Fall ISBN 1-57471-692-1.

Source: This is a summary of the workshop Karen Rolston and Ginny Marx delivered at the OAFCCD Annual Conference in October 2003.