



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders OAFCCD

A Mother Asks - Please Don't Cut Services

Submitted by Virginia Buchner

On a daily basis in my home, my 5-year old son sheds tears, throws his arms up in the air, gives up and leaves the room in frustration. The reason is that I can't always understand what my son wants to tell me about a toy, a drink, something to eat, or the need to go to the washroom. This year he began to receive therapy at school for his difficulties, but what is going to happen to him with a reduction in speech and language services? Children look to adults for direction and when we can't give it, their world is crushed - and they can become withdrawn.

My eldest son can't understand why his little brother can't speak properly. He didn't need speech and language, and has always been at the top of his class academically. He was listening while the 5-year old and I were doing speech and language homework, and he became disgusted because his brother was unable to say the words correctly. "Just make him say it right, Mom," he said. In this respect, he has adopted an attitude common to many others who fail to understand the complexity of speech. My eldest son thinks therapy should be a one time session, and that results should occur overnight. The communication problem is driving a wedge between my sons.

The speech and language services are a direct asset to the education of our children. Why are you reducing the speech and language services these children are using when you consider the consequences? What happens to children who can't speak correctly - who in turn, can't read, write or answer a math question because of language? This will only multiply the children's frustrations with the result that as time passes the children will become more handicapped.

As a mother and a taxpayer who believes money for education should be our #1 priority, I have three questions. Why did you reduce these services? Are you willing to reverse that decision, not only for the 1995-96 budgets, but for future years - and for all the children in Elgin County, including your nieces or nephews, and grandchildren? We don't know what is in the future - an accident, a fall, a sickness - and these children too may need these services. Finally, as a mother, I ask, what happens to my 5-year old in September? Will he be treated by a speech and language pathologist? If so, how much therapy time will he have? Obviously it's unlikely to be enough to continue to meet his needs.

Source: Extract from a presentation by Virginia Buchner to the Elgin Public Board of Education, in response to the decision to reduce services and eliminate Speech and Language Pathologist positions. OAFCCD September 1995