

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Why are Speech-Pathology Services Needed in Schools?

School presents a particular challenge to children with communication disorders because:

- ⇒ The language used in the classroom is complex.
- ⇒ Most instruction is delivered through the language code in spoken or written form so you must be able to listen or read to understand.
- ⇒ The child lets the teacher know what they have learned by speaking or writing.
- ⇒ Children are expected to learn through listening at least 60% of the time during the elementary school years and 90% of the time during the secondary school years.
- ⇒ Learning to read requires good language skills, since reading is simply another code which depends upon oral language knowledge.
- ⇒ Learning to write involves high level language skills.
- ⇒ It is estimated that 10% of students will have a language delay or disorder

What is the solution?

- There is clear evidence that language intervention is effective and that the earlier treatment is begun, the better the outcome.
- For school children with weak language skills, language services which are integrated into the education setting by school Speech-Language Pathologists have resulted in important educational outcomes:
 - ✓ Significant gains in reading skills for elementary school children
 - ✓ Meaningful improvements in adaptive behaviour in the classroom and at home
 - ✓ Substantial reductions in the drop-out rate for students in secondary school
 - ✓ For children *at risk* for poor life outcomes, lasting benefits representing a significant savings to the social support system and society
- Better outcomes in education for children mean that these children become contributing and independent members of society thus saving our limited resources.