



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS O.A.F.C.C.D. NEWSLETTER

May 2007

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May is Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month!

Did You Know:

- Most Canadians take communication for granted. One in 10 Canadians has a speech, language, or hearing disorder which hinders their capacity to communicate.
- Early identification and rehabilitation of speech and hearing disorders can often prevent communication difficulties in school, on the job, and in social situations.
- Speech-language pathologists are educated professionals who are trained to evaluate and treat speech and language disorders.
- Audiologists are essential members of the health care team who are trained to evaluate and treat a full range of hearing disorders.
- Speech-language pathologists and audiologists work within the school, health care, or private sectors to improve the quality of life of people who have communication disorders.

If your child has been helped by a Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist let people know. Sharing your story about how the services have helped your child will increase awareness about the importance of speech and language services.

This Issue Features:

- *2007 Summer Camp Directory*
- *Invitation to the Annual General meeting*
- *15 Minutes a Day Can Make A Difference!*
- *Learning Together at ConnectAbility.ca*

OAFCCD Annual General Meeting

Saturday June 2nd, 2007
4:30-5:30pm

You are invited to attend the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) Annual General Meeting. The meeting will be held on **Saturday June 2nd, 2007** at the **Harbourfront Community Centre, Queen's Quay West, Toronto.**

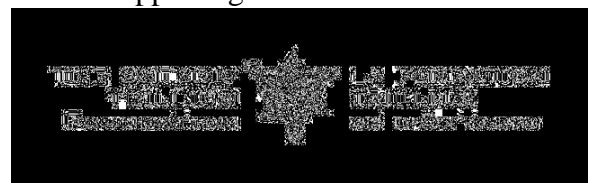
There is no charge for members to attend. If you would like to attend, please call Alison Morse at 519-842-9506 to register.

Parents As Partners Program Continues to Grow!

Parent workshops and staff training are taking place in various communities this spring. Parent workshops are being held in Toronto, York Region, Simcoe, Prescott and Smiths Falls.

Parent response to the workshops has been very positive and it is clear that parents want more information on how to work collaboratively with schools. Check out the Parents As Partners Website at www.parents-as-partners.ca for tips and resources that could help you.

Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for supporting Parents as Partners.



Fifteen Minutes A Day Can Make a Difference!

Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LP) are not only interventionists but also preventionists for the development of oral and written language and social communication skills of all children. This article will describe a collaborative project for young English Language Learning (ELL) children designed to improve parental home reading practices and the emergent literacy skills of the children.

The earliest experiences and achievements in literacy begin at birth and usually last until the end of preschool. Emergent literacy involves the development of print conventions, word concepts, and alphabet knowledge in the preschool years, a necessary foundation for later formal instruction in reading. Interventions employing adult and child shared reading activities in which children engage in conversations surrounding elements of print have been shown to increase phonological awareness and significantly improve print and word concepts and alphabetic knowledge.

The intervention program took place over 8 consecutive weeks and was administered by one registered S-LP and a senior graduate student in Speech-Language Pathology. Each week, during a break-time from English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, parents and children were gathered to learn a different technique (Technique of the Week) for 15 minutes.

The trainer described the technique, then each parent practised the technique with their child and associated book, while the trainer circulated to provide individual instruction as needed. Each parent was given the book to keep and asked to read to their child, using the technique, at least 3 times/week. A sheet describing each technique with a picture representing the technique and examples of what could be done was given to the parents along with a magnet to post on the sheet on refrigerator as a reminder. (See Appendix B for List of Techniques)

Despite the simplicity and brevity of the program

(total of 2 hours of training), pre-to-post increases were evident in home literacy practices and parental observations of increased emergent literacy behaviours in their children while engaging in shared reading at home. All children demonstrated gains in print conventions and word awareness with children in the four year range showing the greatest gain. Alphabet concept showed only modest improvements.



Collaborating with parents who are ESL in a shared reading training program can improve their home literacy practices, resulting in improved emergent literacy skills in their children. Children younger than four years of age can benefit from an emergent literacy program.

Source: **OSLA Perspectives:** *Development of Emergent Literacy in English Language Learning Children Through Parent Shared Reading*, by **Genese Warr-Leeper and Karla N. Washington**, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, **Tanya L. Wren**, Pathways Children Centre, Windsor, Ontario. Complete article available on the OAFCCD Website.

Activity One:

Let your child be the Leader!

Let the child have an active role by holding the book and turning the pages to “help” you read. This will help your child to enjoy reading and be part of the activity. They will learn about when it is the right time to turn the page or how to hold the book the right way up, and it can be a fun experience you share together.

Let the Child:

- Hold the book
- Turn the pages
- Turn the wheels, open the flaps or anything else the child can touch, feel or open
- Choose the book to read, and
- Where to read the book

Tell the child:

- How to hold the book
- When to turn the page
- What direction to turn the page
- That they are helping and doing a good job!

For more techniques check the OAFCCD website.



Appendix B Parent Activities to Promote Literacy Development



Week	Technique	Target Category	Corresponding Book	Rationale for Book Choice
1	Let the child lead	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Turn and Learn</i> (Bumblebee Books, 2003)	Highly interactive and manipulative
2	Track print and talk about print	<i>Print Concepts</i>	<i>Spot's First Walk</i> (Hill, 1991)	Interactive; Features large, bold narrative print; Print embedded in pictures
3	Ask child to predict what will happen	<i>Story Awareness/Attention</i>	<i>Just Me and My Puppy</i> (Mayer, 1985)	Predictive value of story and dissociation between narrative story and reality depicted in pictures
4	Ask questions about print	<i>Print Concepts</i>	<i>Spot Goes to the Park</i> (Hill, 1991)	Interactive; Features large, bold narrative print; Print embedded in pictures
5	Talk about the alphabet and letters in the book	<i>Phonological Awareness</i>	<i>Dr Suess, ABC</i> (Dr. Suess, 1960)	Direct discussion of the entire alphabet featuring capital and lower case letters and sound association
6	Discuss rhyming words and encourage rhyme detection/production/play	<i>Phonological Awareness</i>	<i>All By Myself</i> (Ailiki, 2000)	Diverse community represented; rhyming prose
7	Ask child to recall aspects of the story	<i>Story Awareness/Attention</i>	<i>A Pocket for Corduroy</i> (Freeman, 1978)	Diverse community represented; amenable to story recall
8	Allow child to fill in words or pretend to read	<i>Motivation and Story Awareness/Attention</i>	<i>Me Too!</i> (Mayer, 1983)	Repetitive nature of book

Ten Tips for Successful Transition to High School

Entering high school is an exciting time for students. They are moving into what is often a larger school environment. This can lead to anxiety or periods of unease. Here are some steps parents and caregivers can take to help students start high school on a positive note.

1. **Be interested and enthusiastic about their move to high school.**

Your encouragement will help your child to make a successful transition to High School. Listen to their experiences and expectations. Don't dwell on your own experiences of school.

2. **Attend the High School Orientation Day**

If your child will be entering high school then keep a watch for orientation days or information sessions. These visits are designed to help parents and their children prepare for starting high school. Some children, because of pressure from their peers, will try to discourage their parents from attending orientation days. Being there will help you understand your child's experiences better.

Also keep a look out for other events at your child's prospective school which may help him/her learn about what high school is like. Many schools arrange classes or tours for prospective students.

3. **Make sure travel arrangements to and from school are organized.**

Organize travel passes. Some city buses require Photo identification cards. This will help settle some of the concern about independent travel. Talk about back-up travel arrangements, for example, what to do if a bus is late or doesn't come.

4. **Discuss the changes every student will experience.**

Emphasize that many people feel apprehensive about changing from a small primary school to a larger high school, and that there will be people to help them adjust.

5. **Organize your child's uniform well before the first day of school.**

Having the new uniform will help your child start to feel a sense of belonging to the school. If there isn't a uniform find out about the dress code.

6. **Learn about school routines and timetables.**

Talking to student already enrolled at the school can be useful in finding out information about things such as sporting venues used by the school and school finishing times. The school usually provides student timetables in the late summer.

7. **Help your child to develop good study habits.**

Try to provide them with somewhere private and quiet to study. Help your child to set aside a particular time to study. Work out a daily timetable that incorporates all your child's needs and interests. Regularly viewed TV programs, club activities and sport should all be part of the timetable. Ultimately they will need to manage their own study and they can guide you in what is helpful for them.

8. **Practise organizational skills.**

In the first few weeks of high school you might want to check with your child that they have the right books for the following day. You will quickly encourage a good habit. Many schools provide a Planner that can be used to record homework assignments and due dates.

9. **Discuss emergency and safety issues.**

Talk about these issues - including new routes to school or taking essential medication - simply and without emotion. Allow your child to contribute their views and develop a plan together. Find out who the staff are at the school that can help them if they need assistance or to store medication.

10 **Let your child know that you trust them and that they can trust you.**

Keep communication open about all your child's experiences, and make sure they know you're available if things go wrong.

**Source: New South Wales, Australia
Department of Education Website**

