

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN
WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS
O.A.F.C.C.D. NEWSLETTER
January 2000



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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

I am pleased to say that some very exciting things are happening in special education at this time. The **review of Policy/Program Memorandum 81 is underway**, and is expected to be completed by May, with implementation planned for September of this year. OAFCCD is well represented as I am a member of the Speech and Language Task Force and Alison Morse is a member of the Health Support Services Task Force.

The **Minister of Education, Janet Ecker, also announced on January 27th a three year plan, including increased funding, for improved quality and accountability in special education.** OAFCCD representatives will be attending one of the planned briefing sessions related to this announcement and will have the opportunity to ask questions. We have received a letter acknowledging our request to meet with Janet Ecker and we hope to be able to do this soon.

Unfortunately, cuts to speech and language services continue to take place across the province. Hopefully we can prevent or stop them by voicing our objections and requesting adequate funding.

At the provincial level we will continue to advocate for **mandated speech and language services, under the Ministry of Education, for all school age children when they start school** but we also need your help. I have enclosed, with this Newsletter, a form letter to the Minister of Education, as well as an addressed envelope, for you to sign and forward to her. **Please send the letter**, with a personal note about your child's needs or how services have helped a child you know, and include your name and address. **These letters must be forwarded immediately in order for them to have any impact on the policy and funding decisions of the Ministry.**

On a very positive note, I am very pleased to report that the **Barbershoppers continue to provide financial support** enabling us to continue to support our members and their children. Big thanks to all of the members who responded to the renewal form in the fall Newsletter. **Membership fees are a very important source of income** for the organization, and we would encourage anyone who has not paid their annual fees to mail them in today. I would also like to thank the generous members who also sent a donation.

In other news, we are hoping to have the OAFCCD video completed by April so that it can be used for public awareness activities in **May - Speech and Hearing Month.** We are still looking for volunteers to represent OAFCCD on school board **Special Education Advisory Committees**, so please call if you are interested.

Planning is underway for the **OAFCCD Annual Meeting** to be held on **Saturday May 13th, 2000 in Ottawa.** The day will feature a workshop for families and Chapter Leaders. An invitation with all the details will be mailed out in April. This meeting is planned with all of our members in mind so **mark it on your calendar and plan to attend!!!**

Sharen Heath,
President

ATTENTION SLPs! SUMMER SPEECH CAMPS

OAFCCD will again be including a list of summer communication day camps in the May Newsletter. If any Speech-Language Pathologist, or agency is planning to offer a Camp this summer, please provide the **information to Alison Morse by April 1, 2000.** Information can be mailed to OAFCCD at 13 Segal Drive, Tillsonburg, ON N4G 4P4 or faxed to (519)842-3228.

Help Your Child Stand up to School Yard Bullies!!

Children who look different, have a disability, or difficulty talking are sometimes the target of teasing or bullying by other children. We can't always be with our child to protect them and it is very important that we empower our children by giving them the skills to stand up for themselves.

Bullies know they can get their rewards by teasing kids who are quiet and non assertive because they'll get away with it. Bullies also pick on kids who'll give them a reaction - they want that control, to make you perform for them.

Parents can help by teaching kids to be assertive, but not aggressive. Kids can stand up for themselves with positive body language - standing tall, making eye contact. This lets the bully know the child will not tolerate being bullied. Children also need to have a plan; to know what they are going to do and where to go for help.

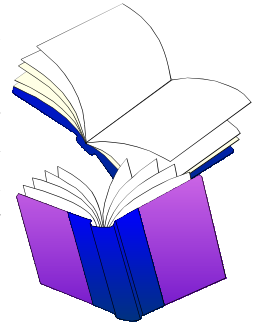
If your Child is being bullied, here's how you can help:

- ✓ Teach your child how to be assertive and to communicate messages with the body - through eye contact and tone of voice.
- ✓ Teach your child not to get into conversation with the bully (who wants a reaction). Your child can say two words - "Yeah, whatever" - and walk away.
- ✓ Help your child work out a plan. For example, if the bully follows, turn around and respond calmly. Then walk toward an adult.
- ✓ Remind your child that when a bully sees that you won't react, teasing will be less fun for the bully and he will stop. Remember that others are also watching and learning from what you are doing.
- ✓ Remind your child that kids get teased for everything and anything. Physical differences are the most obvious, but kids tease others to get reactions and attention. It doesn't mean there is something "wrong" with you. Bullies just want to figure out what button to press to make you react.
- ✓ Notice positive things your child is doing. Use every single opportunity to acknowledge and talk about positive behaviours. This will build and re-enforce the child's self-esteem.

Information reprinted from: Standing Up For Kids, by Lorna Renooy, in AboutFace, Summer 1999 Issue Vol. 13, No. 2

HOMEWORK TIPS

Homework can seem overwhelming to many children. As a result they avoid doing it or leave it to the last minute and try to rush the job. Children need to develop good study habits and there are many ways in which you can help.



- ⇒ Help your child get into the habit of using a planner for homework
- ⇒ For longer assignments, work with your child to break it into manageable chunks and help your child work out a timetable for the component parts
- ⇒ Practice outlining material - key ideas could be in point form on small pieces of paper which can then be put in order of importance
- ⇒ Practice drawing conclusions - about TV shows, family activities/concerns/your child's opinions
- ⇒ Practice sorting main ideas and details from everyday life
- ⇒ Practice sequencing everyday activities
- ⇒ Go over questions before reading the material, such as end of Chapter or unit questions; generate questions from unit goals or common sense (who, what, when, where, why)
- ⇒ Practice paraphrasing material (saying it in your own words)
- ⇒ Help your child learn vocabulary:
 - ⇒ content specific vocabulary - science terms, from a specific Unit, i.e. on the Inuit or Nature
 - ⇒ build vocabulary knowledge - descriptive words, figures of speech, multiple meaning words

Children also need a quiet place to work and it helps to have a regular routine. Doing homework on a daily basis, at the same time and place, can help a child to develop good homework habits.

Remember, your child must do the work, but your involvement and interest can make all the difference!!

Based on materials presented by Janet Doonkervort, S.L.P. in an OAFCCD Chapter workshop.

AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Research tells us that an outstanding amount of learning takes place in the first five years of life - much more so than we previously thought. Children start using "recognizable" language at around twelve months of age (if not sooner) as they learn more and more about themselves and their world (home) and the people in it - mum-mum, dad-dad. These are building blocks of language.

If a child fails in his first attempts to communicate, frustrations mount and confidence never gets a chance to bloom. Expressing needs, wants and ideas, and sharing fun and sorrow are basic human needs at all ages.

If natural speech is not present, augmentative communication systems can often help - either by acting as a bridge until speech develops or by providing an alternative if speech does not develop.

Augmentative communication refers to any communication approach designed to support or augment an individual's communication output including:

- any natural voice or speech available
- body language - touching, shrugging, pointing, eye contact, facial expression, pantomime
- manual sign language
- picture and symbol displays
- technological aids - computers, voice output communication aids
- print

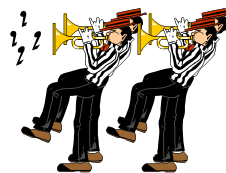
Children learn to talk through hearing others talk to them. Children who are expected to use an augmentative communication system need to have models of how to do this. Sign to your child as much as possible when you talk to him, point to pictures on his display, use communication device yourself.

Advocate and educate others. Many non-verbal children will become non-verbal adults. Help prepare the world, in which they will find themselves in twenty years, to be a knowledgeable and accepting place. Being visible and active is critical.

Let your child talk in your presence. Don't always talk

for your child - even when this might be easier and faster. Training them now to ask for and pay for their popsicle at the variety store may develop the necessary skills and confidence to do their own grocery shopping as an adult. Expect the best from your child whatever their skill level. Regardless of special needs, as an adult they'll assume the same desires, goals and expectations as their peers. Help them to develop positive "I can" image. Help them to see themselves as responsible and productive members of society.

Article based on materials developed by Geraldine Schram, S.L.P., for Hamilton Wentworth Communication Collective



PREPOSITIONAL PARADE

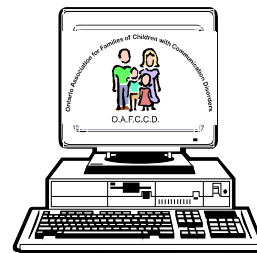
in - on - under - beside

Have your child select a small toy which he/she can hold while marching around the room to music or clapping. When the music is stopped, shout out a prepositional phrase describing where the toy should be placed (i.e. under the blue chair, beside the big ball, on the colouring table.) At this point, the child runs to put the toy in the location described before the music is played again. Next time, let your child have the opportunity to instruct you on the position of the toy.

Imagination Plus Tip #5 reprinted from The Purple Giraffe Newsletter, Dr. Karen Halpern, Language Plus Toronto

OAFCCD WEBSITE

"Thanks to a wonderful Big Sis/She found this site and sent it to me (Mom). I am sure you know how hard it is to know if we are doing everything we can for these children." Nicky's Mom



"Thank you for such a wonderful web site, that I just happened to run upon!. The Poem & Stories page is great to have. I'll be checking out everything else too. Thanks Again." Jan, Mom to Blake

Susan Richards does a great job as our WebMaster!! The address is www.cyberus.ca/oafccd

COMING EVENTS

“Windows to the Future - The Explosive Child”
8:30am - 4:00pm, May 19, 2000 (Kitchener)
Presentation by Dr. Ross Greene, provides an alternative to traditional behaviour management approaches. Fee \$100 **Contact: Learning - Disabilities Assoc. of Kitchener-Waterloo (519)743-9091**

Making the Connection: Language, Learning and Social Behaviour (Ottawa) Forum to help parents of preschool children understand language development and strategies to use at home. No fee **Contact: First Words, (613)820-4922**

“More than just Talking” 6-8pm, February 29, 2000 (London) Alerts parents to the red flags for speech and language problems, and provides tips on how to help children at home. **Contact: London Speech and Language Centre, Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370**

“Cracking the Code - Enhance Early Literacy Skills”, 6-8pm, February 22, 2000 (London) Teaches parents strategies for promoting literacy skills in children six years of age and younger. **Contact: London Speech and Language Centre, Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370**

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) February 18-19, 2000(Oakville) Official two day PECS training session. Parent Fee \$400. **Contact: Four Points (905)849-7993**

Preschool Parent Workshops (Toronto) Sessions on a variety of topics offered throughout the city. **Contact: Information and Referral Line (416)395-0411.**

Preschool Group for Children with speech, language and motor skill difficulties (Toronto) Small group sessions twice a week at Bloorview - McMillan Centre Monthly fee \$150. **Contact: Kate (416)250-6025**

Speech-Language Group Therapy for preschool children with Down Syndrome (Toronto) 10 free weekly sessions of 90 minutes led by an SLP. **Contact: Sandra Hartnell, (416)925-5141 Ext. 350**

Parent Workshop “Teamwork -the best way to

help your Exceptional Student” April 1, 2000 (London) Workshop and Information Fair sponsored by the Special Education Advisory Committee of the Thames Valley District School Board. **Contact: Alison Morse (519)688-0369**

Parent Workshop Series, Jan - May, 2000 (London) A series of Tuesday evening workshops to provide information and skill development for parents. **Contact: Learning Disabilities Assoc. of London-Middlesex (519)438-6213**

“Individual Support Agreements - Everything You Need to Know” (Toronto) Seminars for parent of individuals with developmental disabilities. **Contact: Pam Geddes, Life TRUST Planning 1-800-638-7256**

“Understanding the School Process and Accessing it” and “Creating and Advocacy File for your Child” (Scarborough) Parent workshops organized by the Learning Disabilities Assoc. of Scarborough. **Contact: (416)264-1003**

Children’s Group Programs, Jan - June 2000 (Ajax) Weekly workshops focus on literacy, math, social skills and daily living skills. **Contact: Speech, Language and Learning Centre (905)686-4800**

Parent Resources

If there are no parent workshops or children’s groups listed for your area, try contacting the **Preschool Speech and Language Program** or the **Learning Disabilities Association**. Both run parent workshops and even if your child is a little older or does not have a learning disability, many of the workshops will be helpful.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario also has many useful books and resource documents. They have recently updated their guide to special education, **“Still Putting the Pieces Together,” 6th Edition** and it is available for only \$15. **Contact: LDAO at (416)929-4311**

An educational resource guide **“Effective Teaching Strategies for Successful Inclusion (A Focus on Down Syndrome)”** is available for \$20 from the Down Syndrome Assoc. of Metropolitan Toronto by calling Lorraine Crozier at (416)966-0990