



# ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

## O.A.F.C.C.D. NEWSLETTER

May 2009

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### OAFCCD Parents as Partners Project Ending Soon

The three year Parents as Partners project, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, will be ending in June 2009. The last few workshop have been completed but the project resources and activities will be sustained through the Website and partnerships with community agencies across the province.

The project has been very successful and has exceeded the project targets with OAFCCD Parents as Partners workshops delivered to over 600 parents and 500 community agency staff.

The parents and care givers who attended the OAFCCD Parents as Partners workshops were very pleased with the quality of the workshop resources and activities. Parents at the workshops have said:

*“Great materials and knowledgeable presenters.”*

*“Good ideas that I will use at my next meeting with the school.”*

For many parents of children with special needs it can be very difficult to get out to workshops. Some parent workshops were canceled due to low registration and this has encouraged OAFCCD to look at different ways of getting information to parents.

One way is through the OAFCCD Parents as Partners website which has parent tip sheets, and links to school board and community agencies resources. Using the website, parents can download useful resources or link to information from their local school board.

Another way has been to provide training to staff from community agencies on how to use the OAFCCD Parents as Partners Workshop materials one-on one

with families. This type of training has been very well received and enables front line staff, who are involved with helping parents with the transition to school, to customize how they use the resources to meet family needs. Staff who attended the training sessions report:

*“this will help in preparing parents for transitions, not only to JK/SK but to other grades”*

*“Gave me an opportunity to look at this information from a parent’s point of view and to change the way we do business back at the school.”*

The OAFCCD Parents as Partners program will be sustained in several ways. In a few communities, local agencies have plans to offer the parent workshops on an annual basis. These workshops have been customized to combine resources from the OAFCCD Parents as Partners program and the local community. These workshops for families of children with special needs starting school will be offered annually in the spring or fall.

In other communities, the local agencies have recognized the difficulties in organizing and delivering parent workshops and have instead decided to incorporate OAFCCD Parents as Partners resources into their transition to school processes. This means that they can include examples of successful practices and share useful parent activities or information with parents individually as needed.

OAFCCD also plans to continue to partner with agencies that would like to bring the OAFCCD Parents as Partners program to their community. While there are no longer funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to cover project costs, workshops can still be provided on a fee for service basis. Anyone that is interested in finding out more can contact Alison Morse at 519-842-9506 or by e-mail at [abmorse@kwicc.com](mailto:abmorse@kwicc.com)

## OAFCCD Partnership with ConnectABILITY

OAFCCD has been working with Community Living Tillsonburg for many years, and recently partnered with Community Living Tillsonburg and Community Living Toronto to develop new content for the connectABILITY Website.

As part of the project, the OAFCCD *Communicating for Fun, Parent and Child Activity Calendars for Better Speech, Language and Hearing* have been updated. The updated activity calendars feature new Key Word graphics that can be printed with each Calendar. The activities are divided into three age groups, Toddler, Preschool and Kindergarten Aged and provide families with suggestions for activities to help children develop speech, language and listening skills.

Other new additions to the connectABILITY website include resources to help children get ready for starting school and using the school bus; for parents of children with special needs living on a farm or travelling; as well as Family Math music and songs to promote number recognition and a positive attitude to numeracy.

These new resources are available in the Library section of the connectABILITY website under Regional Pages – Rural. The website address is:

[www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

The Calendars can still be found on the OAFCCD website at [www.oafccd.com](http://www.oafccd.com) A sample calendar for Kindergarten aged children has been included with this Newsletter.

### May Newsletter Inserts

- 2009 Speech and Language Summer Camp Directory
- Invitation to the Annual General meeting
- Communicating for Fun, Parent and Child Activity Calendar for Better Speech, Language and Hearing, *Food and Our Five Senses Kindergarten Calendar*

## Exciting New Project

OAFCCD has received funding from the Ministry of Education, Parent Engagement Office to develop a Parent Guide to the school system.

The Parent Guide is being developed in partnership with the Speech-Language Pathologists at the Upper Garand and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Boards and the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA).

The Parent Guide is intended to meet the needs of families of students with speech and language disorders and help parents to partner with the school system effectively. During the past 15 years, OAFCCD has written many articles for parents about the speech and language services in the school system, and about how parents can help their child. The Parent Guide will bring this information together in one place and should help parents to work effectively with school staff to support their child's success at school.

The Parent Guide is currently in draft format. Any parents or professionals who are interested in helping with the project by reviewing the draft can contact Alison Morse at 519-842-9506 for an electronic copy.

The Parent Guide should be completed by early in the fall and copies will be available for purchase in October 2009.

## May is Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month

- 1 in 10 Canadians has a speech, language or hearing problem.
- An estimated 4% of preschool population has a significant speech or language disorder
- 8% to 12% of school children have some form of speech or language impairment
- Speech and language disorders are strongly related to failure in reading and writing

If you have a concern about your child's speech or language, trust your instincts and get help! Contact the Preschool Speech and Language Program in your community, or talk to your child's teacher.