



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

September 2000

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OAFCCD - President's UPDATE

The first year of the Millenium has been a very busy one for OAFCCD. During the winter and early spring parents and children were interviewed and filmed for the **OAFCCD Video** funded by the **Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada**. The finished video was launched at the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa and the project celebrated at a special reception in Tillsonburg. To date we have distributed 65 copies of the video and the response has been great. (See article on page 2 for information on how to order a copy.)

We are **very grateful to the children and families** that participated in the video and we have been congratulated on the effectiveness of the message. **Parents are the experts** and the stories they share are very powerful.

In addition to funding the video, Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada provided funding for the development of **Parent Fact Sheets**. A series of Fact Sheets has now been completed and is available by calling Alison Morse or from the OAFCCD Website. (See article on Page 3 for more details).

OAFCCD has also been fortunate to obtain funding from the **New Ontario Trillium Foundation**. This grant is for \$45,000 and it will be paid over three years to help to offset operating costs, including salary for our part time Provincial Co-ordinator, Alison Morse.

At the provincial level, Alison and I were also very busy representing our members on the **Policy/Program Memorandum 81 Task Groups**. The Task Group work was completed in May and the recommendations have now been given to the inter-ministerial Steering Committee for their consideration. It may be some time before there are any further developments.

However, if you have concerns about the lack of services for your child, it will still be helpful to let the Minister and your local MPP know. Call for a sample letter that you can send to the Minister.

SEAC REPS WANTED!

In November, the municipal elections will include the election of school board Trustees. At the same time the **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members will be appointed for the new term** (January 2001 to November 2003). Each SEAC consists of up to 12 Parent Association representatives, one or more members at large, and up to 3 school board Trustees. **OAFCCD** is recognized as an eligible Parent Association and **can nominate a representative to each school board SEAC**.

SEAC reps must be over 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen, a resident and tax payers to the relevant school board. Catholic school boards may also require SEAC members to be members of the Catholic Church.

Having a representative of OAFCCD, at the monthly Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meetings of each school board, **helps to remind** the school board administration and Trustees that our children have needs that must be met, and **that Speech-Language Pathology services are important**.

OAFCCD currently has SEAC reps for 15 school boards who are willing to be nominated for another term. However, there are **57 other school boards where we do not have representation**. If you are concerned about school services and interested in becoming a SEAC member, please **call Alison Morse to find out more**.

New for Private Schools!

Speech - Language Pathology services are now available in Private and Religious Schools through the School Health Support Program. For more information call your local Community Care Access Centre or Alison at (519)688-0369.

Specific Language Impairment - Lots to Learn from British Conference

In times of fast paced change, it is prudent to look for inspiration where one can find positive encouragement. Such an opportunity was afforded me last year when the Barbershoppers of Ontario supported my attendance at the AFASIC conference at York University in England. AFASIC stands for *The Association for all Speech Impaired Children*. It is a voluntary organization and registered charity in Britain, its aim being to “*promote understanding, acceptance, equal opportunities, and the integration into society of children and young people with speech and language impairments*”. (May 1997 Bulletin of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists)

AFASIC has been in existence for more than thirty years, supporting families who have children with communication disorders, recently advocating for more early intervention resources as well as increased service provision in schools. Support has come from four full-time and ten part-time staff as well as two hundred volunteers.

At the Third International Symposium on Speech and Language Disorders, there were several papers presented on aspects of Specific Language Impairment. Researchers from many countries were present with the main speakers being from Britain and the US. The presentations outlining the work towards uncovering the genetic origins of Specific Language Impairment (Tomblin) received much attention and comment.

Specific Language Impairment (SLI) refers to marked communication difficulties experienced by children of normal intelligence and for whom there is no clearly identifiable cause such as hearing loss. Identification of these children early in the pre-school years is very important because their oral language difficulties frequently but not necessarily later translate into challenges experienced in learning to read and write.

Careful early identification is necessary as Paul and Weismer indicated from their studies of large groups of two year olds with expressive language delay, half of whom by the age of three, had normal expressive language. While “watching and waiting” may be the best form of intervention, where there are risk factors and few progress indicators, it is suggested that professional involvement should take a different form.

Findings from SLI studies reported at the conference:

1. Difficulties are very individual to each child (language understanding or use, or both, can be affected).
2. Between 5 and 7% of the child population is affected, making a significant number of children with potential special educational needs. Speech difficulties are experienced by only 5-8% of those affected (Rice). Boys are found to have SLI more often than girls.
3. Difficulties learning vocabulary affect a significant number of these children.
4. There are specific grammatical difficulties. Children with SLI who are learning English as their native language, struggle more than other children with SLI who are learning some other languages currently being studied (Leonard).
5. Some children with SLI have great difficulties with the social use of language (knowing and using the rules of conversation) and/or impairments in non-verbal communication (Bishop).
6. Social and or behavioural difficulties may be present, especially for those children who have both receptive and expressive language difficulties.

A cause for SLI was suggested to be an auditory processing deficit (Tallal). We were cautioned not to become so engrossed in the ‘nature*’ aspects of language that we fail to keep in mind how central learning is (Rice).

It was a stimulating four days amidst the beauty of the ancient walled city of York. Parents and their children have benefited from the support provided by AFASIC in Britain and OAFCCD here in Ontario. The importance of the voluntary sector in influencing policy and keeping a spotlight on the needs of children was apparent.

*I should like to thank the Barbershoppers of Ontario for enabling me to attend the conference.
Marlene Caryl, Speech-Language Pathologist*

NOTE: Thanks to the Barbershoppers, Alison and Sharen will have the opportunity to attend the Afasic Parent Conference in Manchester, England this November and learn more about the organization.

Preschool Services - More Funding

In the spring Provincial Government Budget, new funds for Preschool Speech and Language were announced. A total of six million dollars has been added for services. Part of the funds (\$2.8 million) represents the final installment of the \$20 million originally announced in 1996 and will be allocated across the province.

The other \$3.2 million is intended to support the transition process to school services and ensure that there is no gap between preschool and school services.

In July, Marlene Stein, from the Ministry of Health, held a full day planning session to look at the Transition process from preschool to school services. The meeting involved representatives from preschool and school services, as well as policy staff from the Ministries of Health and Education. OAFCCD was also represented. It is anticipated that transition planning guidelines will be available some time in the fall.

The May Budget also included an announcement of seven million dollars for an infant hearing screening program. This is a very welcome initiative and should ensure that children with hearing problems are identified and receive services much earlier.

OAFCCD VIDEO

OAFCCD has recently been funded by the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada to produce our first video. The video features families sharing stories about the impact of communication disorders on their children and the benefits of getting services from Speech - Language Pathologists.

The video provides information about communication disorders and their treatment with real stories about children. The video highlights the lifelong impact of some communication disorders and the need for services at all ages. It strongly emphasizes the need for Speech - Language Pathology services to be provided to school age children with communication disorders.

Copies of the video can be obtained for \$25.00 (including shipping and handling) or rented for a fee of \$10.00 per month. To order a copy, please call OAFCCD at (519)842-9506 or fax (519)842-3228.

With the help of funding from the **Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada** and the volunteer efforts of Speech-Language Pathologists from across the province, OAFCCD has significantly added to the inventory of Parent Resources.

Over **fifty parent articles** have been formatted for use as hand outs and loaded on to the OAFCCD Website. The parent resource articles on the Website have been divided into a number of sections:

What is Communication?

What is a Communication Disorder?

Concerned about your Child's Speech and Language Development?

Getting Services for Your Child

Parent Resources

General Information on Communication Development

Activities for Parents to Use at Homes

Parenting Tips and Strategies

In addition, all of the OAFCCD Position Papers regarding the need for speech and language services have been put on the Website. The menu allows you to pick and choose the resources you need and print a copy. Of particular interest to many parents will be the series of school articles, which include:

! Getting Ready to Start School

! Getting School Services to Meet Your Child's Needs

! Preparing for an I.P.R.C. (Identification and Placement Review Committee)

! Preparing for an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan)

! Special Education Terms used in Ontario Schools

! Speech and Language Terms and Abbreviations

! Speech and Language Assessment Tools

Visit the OAFCCD Website at www.cyberus.ca/oafccd to view these documents and links to many other speech and language sites. For those without access to the computer we will still be happy to mail you a copy of any of our resources. Just call Alison (519-688-0369) and let her know your issues and she will send you a selection of articles.

OAFCCD Parent Resources

COMING EVENTS

OAFCCD York Chapter - "School Services - What is available and how you can help your child". Tuesday October 10, 7:30 - 9:30pm. **Contact: Dianna Atar (905)726-9261**

OAFCCD Lanark Chapter - Full day Parent Workshop in Smith Falls, featuring Lindsay Moir on Saturday October 21. **Contact: Susan Richards (613)283-3709**

Parent Workshops

(London) - Learning Disabilities Association of London-Middlesex **runs weekly (Tuesday) workshops for parents.** Upcoming topics include Reading (Oct. 10), Helping Children Learn Better (Oct. 17) and Writing (Nov.7) **Contact: LDA at (519)438-6213**

(London) - "More than just Talking", "Cracking the Code" and "Tangled Tongue" are free parent workshops offered regularly by London Speech & Language Centre **Contact: Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370.**

(London) - "Parenting the ADHD Child", Sponsored by the Thames Valley DSB and Learning Disabilities Association of London. Thursday evening sessions, October 12 to November 30, 2000. **Contact: Linda Radford, (519)452-2191.**

(London) - "Helping your Preschooler" a series of workshops that provide parents with practical strategies. "Communicate", Nov. 2, 9 & 16 (7 - 9:30pm) "Speak Clearly" Nov. 8 & 15 (7 - 9:30pm), "Learn Language Through Music, Books & Art" Oct. 10 and Nov. 23 (5 - 7:30pm), "Understand Language" Oct. 18 (7 - 9:30pm) **Contact: Thames Valley Children's Centre at (519)685-8680.**

(London) - "Effective Stress and Time Management", October 28, a half-day program to help busy parents. **Contact: Jane Mclean at Thames Valley Children's Centre (519)685-8680 Ex. 53367**

(Orangeville) - "Understanding Education Funding" a presentation by Lindsay Moir, November 16, 7-9pm. Sponsored by Autism Society of Ontario and Carrie's Place. **Contact: Carrie's Place at (519)941-7038**

Conferences:

(Sudbury) **OSLA Annual Conference** will be held on

October 12 & 13. Pre-conference Session on Wed. 11th "Children with Auditory Processing Disorders as a Subset of Children with Language Disorders: The Chicken vs the Egg. **Contact: OSLA at (416)920-3676.**

(Kingston) **Autism Conference** featuring Dr. Marcia Braden (October 13 & 14) will focus on enhancing the classroom environment and designing effective curriculum for students with Autism. (Parent Fee \$60 one day, \$75 for two) **Contact: Eleanor Egidio (613)549-2350 Ex. 15**

(Toronto) **International Stuttering Awareness Day (ISAD)**, October 21, "The Road to Empowerment" including sessions for teens, parents and professionals. **Contact: Canadian Association for People Who Stutter 1-888-788-8837**

(Toronto) "New Directions in Down Syndrome" a one day conference for families and professionals, October 28. **Contact: Joan Christensen (416)935-0200**

(Toronto) Autism Symposium, November 8-11, 2000. **Contact: Ginny at the Geneva Centre (416)322-7877 Ext. 226**

Children's Sessions:

(London) **Talk It Up Saturday** - An eight week group program for 3-8 Year old children. **Contact: Bonnie Riddolls, (519)642-7370.**

(Ajax) **Children and Youth Training Sessions** - Reading Readiness I and II; Social Skills - Let's Chat, Primary, Junior and Youth Chat. Fall, winter and spring sessions. **Contact: Speech and Learning Centre (905)686-4800.**

Speech and Language Screening:

(Ottawa) **First Words** holds speech and language screening sessions in Ottawa, Nepean, Kanata and Orleans on a regular basis. **Contact: Parent Child Info Line (613)724-4179**

Professional Development:

(Ottawa) 'Finding Alternatives: Assessing the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Child in the Schools' a live inter-active video-conference from ASHA. **Contact: Agathe Rhéaume (613)737-8721**

Name of School Board

SEAC Rep and Alternate

Eastern Ontario Catholic DSB

JoAnne Lorente

Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

Patrice Shennette

Huron-Perth Catholic DSB

Carolyn Carter

Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB

Wendy Johansson
Alternate: Caron Quinn

Lakehead DSB

Jan Hudyma

**Le conseil scolaire de district
des Grandes Rivières**

M.C. Ethier

Near North DSB

Leeann Whitney
Carrie Lee Durocher

North Eastern Catholic DSB

Catherine Martin

Ottawa-Carleton DSB

Nancy Myers
Alternate: Sandra Short

**Peterborough, Victoria,
Northumberland and
Clarington Catholic DSB**

Lise van Laar

Thames Valley DSB

Carol Hawthorne
Alternate: Susan Seymour

Thunder Bay Catholic DSB,

Cathy Fodchuk

Upper Canada DSB

Deanne Garton

Alternate: Susan Richards

Waterloo Region Catholic DSB

Andrea Roberts

Windsor - Essex Catholic DSB

Mary Nouvion
Ann Crossley

OAFCCD still needs SEAC reps on many school boards. If you are interested, please call Alison Morse at (519)688-0369 for more information.

Attention SLPs and Preschool Co-ordinators!!

OAFCCD would like information on parent workshops for the three annual Newsletters. Please fax or mail any notices to OAFCCD at 13 Segal Drive, Tillsonburg, Ontario N4G 4P4 or fax (519)842-3228. Newsletters are prepared in January, April and September.

Annual Membership Renewal!

If you have not yet paid your annual membership, the **fees are now due**. Membership includes copies of the three Newsletters produced each year; information on special events or workshops in your area, membership in the local Chapter, and more! **If you do not renew this may be your last Newsletter!!**

These fees are critical to our operations and a renewal form has been enclosed with the Newsletter. This is the **last time annual membership will be \$15**, as an increase to \$20 was approved at the Annual General Meeting for next year. (Membership fees will be waived upon request.)

Silver Ribbon Campaign

The Silver Ribbon Campaign is an effort 'to promote awareness and support of children with disABILITIES'. This campaign was started by the Our-Kids List Server on the Internet and has been adopted by many organizations worldwide that care about children with disabilities. We are selling silver ribbon metal pins with a military clasp for \$5.50 each (includes shipping). To order send name, address, phone number and number of pins required with cheque payable to Lanark, Leeds & Grenville OAFCCD to: **Lanark, Leeds & Grenville OAFCCD, c/o Susan Richards, R.R. #5, 342 Code Dr., Smith Falls, ON, K7A 4S6**

This Issue Features:

***Specific Language Disability - Report from Britain
Board Games - Have fun and help your child
Preschool Services - More Funding
Membership Renewal Form***