

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

OCTOBER 1999

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## Memorandum 81 - Review set to go!!!

**President Sharen Heath** has recently been notified that **the first meeting of the stakeholder consultation on Policy/Program Memorandum 81** has been set for later this month. OAFCCD is one of a number of groups that has been pushing for this review, and it was promised by former Minister of Education, Dave Johnson, at our meeting last summer.

**Policy/Program Memorandum 81** was released in 1984 to address responsibilities for "**Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings**". The development of the School Health Support Program through the Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), formerly Home Care, was a direct result of this memo.

The concerns of OAFCCD, and other organizations, relate to two key issues. The first is that much of the **legislation referenced in the document has been changed in the last 15 years** and there has been significant changes in the way health care services are managed and delivered. Secondly, the Memorandum has been **implemented inconsistently across the province**, with the result that there is a wide disparity in available services.

**OAFCCD is especially concerned with the provision of speech and language services, because Memo 81 divides responsibility between the Ministries of Health and Education.** The division of responsibilities and inconsistent implementation have created service gaps and disparity between school boards.

It is anticipated that the consultation process will last six months and the recommendations will be given to the Minister before the end of the school year. **As a parent organization we need input from our members. If you have concerns, a personal story to share, or you are interested in finding out more, please contact Alison Morse at (519)688-0369.**

### **IPRC and IEP:**

### **The KEYS to**

### **Getting School Services**

Many of the parents who call OAFCCD want to know

**how they can get speech and language services at school.** Some are parents of children who are just leaving preschool services, and others are parents of students who are struggling in the classroom. All of these parents know that their child needs some extra help but they are not sure how to get it.

**OAFCCD recommends that parents should** have the student's needs documented through the **Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process** and the development of an **Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.)**. This is the only way to ensure that the student's needs are recognized and to make the school board accountable for provision of necessary services.

The **IPRC process involves a meeting of a school board committee**, consisting of school staff and a representative from the school board (usually a Special Education staff), **with the family** (and the student over 16 years) **to decide:**

1. **Identification:** If the student meets the Ministry of Education criteria to be identified as an Exceptional Student\*
  2. **Placement:** Where the student will be placed to receive the services and supports needed
  3. **Needs Statements:** What are the priority needs of the student
- \* **The five Categories of Exceptionalities are Behaviour; Communication; Intellectual; Physical and Multiple.**

Following the IPRC, and within 30 days, the school staff **and parents** will develop an **Individual Education Plan**. It will **describes the strategies that will be used to meet the student needs** and how the progress of the student will be measured.

While there are differences in how school boards deliver special education services and how many students they formally identify, **the IPRC process and the IEP are provincially regulated** and every parent has the right to initiate the process. In fact,

recent changes in the regulations governing IPRC and IEPs have strengthened parent participation and clarified roles and expectations.

Although the IPRC and IEP are important keys in getting student's needs met, **the maintenance of good relationships with the classroom teacher and school personnel is critical in getting effective programs delivered in the classroom.** It is, therefore, very important that families work with the school and get the classroom teacher's agreement on the need for assessments and formal identification of the student. An IPRC can proceed without the support of the school staff, but programming is not likely to be effective for the student unless everyone is working together.

The **request for an IPRC can be initiated by the school staff, or by the parent** through a written request to the principal. **Prior to the meeting of the IPRC, the school staff and parents will collect information on the student.** This may involve the student completing certain tests or assessments. Parents are encouraged to share any previous testing or reports that may be relevant. For a student with a communication disorder, **this may include previous Speech and Language Assessments by Private Practitioners or from preschool services.**

Parents will receive written notice of the IPRC and invited to attend. **OAFCCD encourages all parents to attend their child's IPRC.** If the date and time are not convenient ask for a change. If you are uncomfortable about attending the meeting alone, arrange for a friend or advocate to attend. It is important that parents attend the meeting and participate in the discussion. Your signature is required on the IPRC Statement and only by attending the meeting will you fully understand what has been decided.

The IPRC meeting is a formal committee meeting, but it is about your child and you should feel comfortable. **Ask questions** if you do not understand something. School systems have a unique vocabulary and the terms can be confusing. Ask for an explanation **and make sure you understand what is being proposed.** Have your friend make notes or ask the questions if necessary.

At the end of the meeting, you will be asked to sign the IPRC Statement. **Do not sign if you do not agree with any part of the decision - the identification, the placement or the needs statements.** . You can ask to go home and think about it, or you can request another meeting.

If after careful consideration **you are not satisfied with the IPRC decision you can appeal the decision.** You **must write to the Principal** within 15 days and say that you wish to appeal the decision. School boards do not like appeals and it is likely that you will be invited to another IPRC meeting. **OAFCCD recommends that you make every effort to meet and negotiate an acceptable solution** because an ongoing dispute is not in your or your child's best interest. However, **do not settle unless you are satisfied that the student's needs will be met.** Do not accept any claims that the Board can not afford the services or that the program is not available. The school board has an obligation to meet the student's needs and must make every effort.

If the IEP was not shared at the IPRC it must be developed within 30 days. **Parents should be involved in the development of the IEP and will be asked to sign the document when it is completed.** The IEP should clearly outline the strategies and personnel that will be responsible. If the student is over 14 years of age, the IEP should also include a Transition Plan for post secondary or workforce entry.

It is very important that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. As part of the IPRC Process the school board must provide you with a copy of a **Parent Guide**, and should explain the process. If you need more information, or want help in preparing for an IPRC or an IEP, please call Alison Morse at (519)688-0369.

**Please note:** This article has made no reference to ISA Grants. The process of application for ISA Grants is internal to the school boards and the Ministry of Education. **Your focus should be on the IPRC and IEP**, as these are the only accountability mechanisms to ensure that your child's needs are met.

### **SEAC REPS - Make a difference!**

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 Pathologists are an important member of school services. **BIG THANKS to all the following SEAC volunteers!!!!**

<i>Name of School Board</i>	<i>SEAC Rep and Alternate</i>
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<b>Eastern Ontario Catholic DSB</b>	JoAnne Lorente
<b>Greater Essex DSB</b>	Steve Holden
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth DSB</b>	Patrice Shennette
<b>Huron-Perth Catholic DSB</b>	Carolyn Carter
<b>Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB</b>	Wendy Johansson Alternate: Caron Quinn
<b>Lakehead DSB</b>	Jan Hudyma
<b>Le conseil scolaire de district des Grandes Rivières</b>	M.C. Ethier
<b>Niagara DSB</b>	Christine Beatty, Alternate: Liz Hohl
<b>Near North DSB</b>	Leeann Whitney Carrie Lee Durocher
<b>North Eastern Catholic DSB</b>	Catherine Martin
<b>Ottawa-Carleton DSB</b>	Nancy Myers Alternate: Sandra Short
<b>Ottawa Carleton Catholic DSB</b>	Martha (Mardi) de Kemp
<b>Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic DSB</b>	Lise van Laar
<b>Thames Valley DSB</b>	Carol Hawthorne Alternate: Susan Seymour
<b>Thunder Bay Catholic DSB, Upper Canada DSB</b>	Cathy Fodchuk Deanne Garton Alternate: Susan Richards
<b>Upper Grand DSB</b>	Christine McDougall Alternate: Helen Robson
<b>Waterloo Region Catholic DSB</b>	Andrea Roberts
<b>Windsor - Essex Catholic DSB</b>	Mary Nouvion Ann Crossley
<b>York Region DSB</b>	(Observer)Pamela Ellis

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

### **Audiology Alert!!!**

OAFCCD has recently been alerted to proposed changes in the funding mechanism for Audiologists which may reduce consumer access or result in out of pocket costs. For many of our children access **to an audiologist is essential in determining and providing intervention for hearing problems.** If you would like to find out more about this issue, please contact your audiologist or call the Ontario Association for Speech - Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA) for a copy of the Audiology document for consumers at (416)920-3676.

### **PRESCHOOL SERVICES - An UPDATE**

The fact that the number of calls to OAFCCD from families of very young children has diminished could be a sign that the new preschool services are reaching their targets. We certainly hope so!! But we also recognize that there needs to be a lot more public awareness before every child will be identified.

The gap that is emerging from the Preschool initiative is at the schools; when parents register their child and discover that speech and language services are limited or inadequate. OAFCCD will continue to raise concerns about the inadequacy of school services and we are hoping that the Review of Policy/Program Memorandum 81 will lead to substantial service improvements.

### **OAFCCD VIDEO in Production**

As part of on-going efforts to increase awareness of the needs of children with communication disorders and their families, OAFCCD is starting production on a video. The video is being produced with the generous support of the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada and should be available for distribution in May 2000 for Speech and Hearing Month. We are still seeking family volunteers to appear in the video and share their stories. If you are interested and especially if you have any home video of your child, please call Sharen Heath at (519)842-9506.

## COMING EVENTS

**Parent Workshops (London)** - Stuttering can be Prevented - If Detected Early, 7:00pm October 27 25, 1999 **Contact: J. Anthony Wray, (519)675-0449.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - "More than just Talking" Free interactive sessions for families at Chapters, October 27 (Wellington Rd), November 25 (Fanshawe Rd.) **Contact: Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - "Cracking the Code" Teaching Literacy to 6 -8 yr olds. October 20 and November 17, 6-8pm. **Contact: Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - "Parenting the ADHD Child", Sponsored by the Thames Valley DSB and Learning Disabilities Association of London. Thursday evening sessions, October 14 to December 2, 1999. **Contact: Linda Radford, (519)452-2191.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - "Helping your Preschooler - Communicate", October 20 and 27, 7 - 9:30pm; and "Helping your Preschooler - Speak Fluently", November 17, 7 - 9:30pm. **Contact: Dianne at (519)685-8687.**

**Talk It Up Saturday (London)** - An eight week group program for 3-8 Year old children. **Contact: Bonnie Riddolls, (519)642-2172.**

**OSLA Annual Conference (Toronto)** - The Holiday Inn on King, October 20 to 23. **Contact: Conference Planning Office, (416)495-8723.**

**Children and Youth Training Sessions (Ajax)** - Reading Readiness I and II; Primary Reader's Club I and II; Social Skills - Let's Chat, Primary, Junior and Youth. 12 hr programs cost \$150.00. **Contact: Speech and Learning Centre (905)686-4800.**

**PECS Parent Workshop (Oakville)** - Picture Exchange Communication System, 2 night Parent overview, October 19 - 26, 1999. \$75.00 per person, \$125.00 per couple. **Contact: Four Points Inc. (905) 849-8965.**

**Parent Conference (Oakville)** "Striving for Success - Medical and Educational Interventions" for parents of children with Autism/P.D.D., Attention Deficit Disorder, and related disabilities. November 19 & 20, One day registration \$160, Full conference \$300.

**Contact: Four Points Inc. (905)849-7993**

**Autism Workshops (London)** - "Early Identification and Treatment of Autism" and "Depression and Anxiety in Autism" Half day workshops Presented by Susan Bryson, PhD, October 27, 1999. **Contact: Ministry of Community and Social Services (519)858-2774, ext: 2074.**

**Audiology Conference (Toronto)** - Canadian Academy of Audiology Annual Conference, November 11-13, 1999. **Contact: Canadian Academy of Audiology (306)949-7004.**

### Attention SLPs and Preschool System 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!

Many of our members have forgotten to pay their annual membership. These fees are critical to our operations and a renewal form has been enclosed with the Newsletter. At just fifteen dollars, membership is a good deal! Copies of the three Newsletters produced each year; information on special events or workshops in your area, membership in the local Chapter, and more! (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**