

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

September 1998

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## OAFCCD Provincial Update

The last six months have seen significant changes in publicly funded speech and language services. On the plus side all Preschool Speech and Language Initiative Plans have now been approved and a significant expansion of preschool services is occurring. On the other side there has been significant changes in Education and resulting confusion about the status of speech and language services.

Taking a proactive approach, Sharen Heath, President of OAFCCD, sent letters to all new amalgamated School Boards. However, we were still disappointed to hear about proposed cuts to Speech-Language Pathologists by five school boards. By the end of June only one Board had actually reduced positions, but it was made clear that under the new education funding model, speech and language services were still vulnerable.

In an effort to address the issue at the provincial level, Sharen wrote and requested a meeting with Dave Johnson, Minister of Education. In early July, Sharen received a response inviting her and members of OAFCCD to attend a meeting with Lynn MacDonald, Assistant Deputy Minister, Elementary/Secondary Policy, and subsequently with the Minister. Both these meetings took place and we can assure members that the Minister has been informed of OAFCCD concerns.

The Minister believes that OAFCCD concerns, about the inadequacy and inconsistency of speech and language services across the province, have been addressed by the new Funding Model, and that we need to allow more time before making conclusions about service levels. In addition, he believes that parents and tax payers must continue to make the school boards accountable for their actions at the local level.

On a more positive note, the Minister reiterated the Ministry of Education and Training's continued

commitment to the Interministerial Guidelines on Speech and Language Services, and further agreed that there was a need to review the Guidelines and Policy documents that relate to the division of responsibilities between Ministries. We are expecting to receive more details soon. Mr. Johnson's office will also be providing OAFCCD with clarification of the new Education Grants and how they may be used to provide speech and language services.

OAFCCD will also be receiving more information about the Ministry's expectations for each student, with extra support needs, to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). When this information is available we will be providing members with the information and tips on how to prepare an effective IEP.

To help tell the Minister how serious the problems are with school services we need you to sign and send the attached letter to the Minister, Dave Johnson and a copy to your local M.P.P.. If possible, please include your personal story and local circumstances, as this will help add credibility to our case. **I urge all of our members to send this letter** (or a variation if you are a relative or a SLP) as it is critical that we show the Minister how serious the situation has become.

*Sharen Heath,  
President*

### SPECIAL EDITION!!!

Included in this Newsletter is a special supplement from the Easter Seal Society. **Update**, a parent resource, provides information on the New Funding Model for Education. Copies of **Update** have been provided to OAFCCD members by the Easter Seal Society through a special donation from the Barbershoppers. I hope that you find the information helpful

## COMING EVENTS

**Communication/Computers & Technology For**

**Special Kids (London)** - Saturday October 17, 1998 at Jean Vanier School. Parents \$5. Contact: Judy Sinclair, (519)432-9669.

**Toronto Chapter Meeting (Etobicoke)** - "Planning for People with Disabilities", Wed. October 14, 1998 Royal Canadian Legion, Bloor St. W. **Contact: Bill Mosher (416)762-7806.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - Stuttering can be Prevented - If Detected Early, 7:00pm October 22 and November 25, 1998 **Contact: J. Anthony Wray, (519)675-0449.**

**Parent Workshop (Niagara)** - Stuttering can be Prevented - If Detected Early, 7:00pm October 29 **Contact: J. Anthony Wray, (905)353-1219.**

**Parent Workshops (London)** - "More than just Talking" Free interactive sessions for families **Contact: Kerry Earle, (519)642-7370.**

**Signing Course for Families (Hamilton)** - Hamilton Wentworth Communication Collective (HWCC) will be offering a ten week course using Signed English manual system. **Contact: Barbara Rush (905)385-4891.**

**Talk It Up Saturday (London)** - An eight week group program for 3-6 Years and 7 to 10 Years of Age (\$495.00) **Contact: Kerry Erle, (519)642-2172.**

**Stuttering Therapy Group (London)** - Monthly Saturday morning program for 9 to 11 yr olds. October 24th and November 28th. **Contact: J. Anthony Wray, (519)675-0449**

**Lanark Chapter Meeting (Brockville)** - October 21, 1998 7:00pm at Constock Building. **Contact: Connie Beckett (613)284-1227**

**Toronto Chapter Meeting (North York)** - Early November meeting with update on preschool speech and language services and changes in education. **Contact: Susan Menary, (416)222-82-82 Ext.2685.**

**Programmes for Autistic Children and Their Parents in Cantonese (Markham)** - Children Group and Parent Workshops. **Contact: Sandy Cheng, (905)947-0036.**

**Monthly Preschool Parent Workshops (Tillsonburg)** - OAFCCD and United Way are

sponsoring parent workshops and screening clinics, fourth Saturday of the month at the Livingston Centre. **Contact: Alison Morse (519)688-0369.**

**Kindergarten Speech and Language Centre (Dundas)** - Camp T.A.L.C. is offering an intensive Kindergarten Program designed to meet your child's speech and language needs. Programs vary from one full day to four half days per week. **For information, call Judy Nathanson (905)628-8506.**

### **Parents Wanted!!! Special Education Advisory Committee**

Big changes are occurring in the education system and parents are needed to represent the concerns of our children. Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC) are standing committees of each District School Board. SEAC membership involves ten meetings per year, and OAFCCD representatives are provided with information mailings and provincial support. Please consider stepping forward even if you are not normally a "committee person", your children's education is very important and it is very important that we have someone to speak for them. Call Alison at (519)688-0369, if you are interested in finding out more. These boards have specifically requested a parent representative:

- London District Catholic School Board
- Waterloo District Catholic School Board
- Durham District School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Board

Other school districts still have SEAC vacancies and we also need Alternate reps for many other boards. Please call Alison to find out where parents are needed.

**OOPS!!!**

In the May Newsletter we forgot to provide the web site address. **Sorry!!** The OAFCCD web site is at **[www.cyberus.ca/oafccd](http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd)**

