



**Ontario Association for Families of
Children with Communication Disorders
OAFCCD**

Speaking Out for Children

History and development of OAFCCD:

- Formed in 1994 by parents and professionals
- Created a voice for children with speech and language disorders
- Supported by Harmonize for Speech Fund of the Ontario Barbershop Singers
- Legal Incorporation provided credibility
- Charitable status to accept donations and apply for foundation funding
- Invited to provincial consultations
- Recognized as a stakeholder and voice for children with communication disorders
- Grew with one part time staff and network of volunteers - Board members, SEAC reps and Chapter Leaders

Advocacy at the Provincial Level:

- Invitations to government consultations, especially with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education
- Advocates for more publicly funded speech and language services for children
- Worked collaboratively with other provincial organizations for common goals, including improvements to the navigation of speech and language services for children
- Involved in multiple reviews related to [Policy/Program Memorandum 81, Provision of Health Services at School](#), that divides responsibility for speech and language services between school boards and health care agencies
- Participation in Ministry and community committees for Preschool Speech and Language services and Special Needs Strategy
- Recognition as a parent organization eligible to nominate Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) representatives
- Member of the Provincial Parent Association Advisory Committee on Special Education Advisory Committees (PAAC on SEAC)

Achievements:

- Advocacy for the voice of parents in the Preschool Speech and Language Program
- Advocacy for the inclusion of SLPS in the education funding model as a foundational component of education and as an important part of speech

- and language services
- Advocacy for Infant Hearing Screening Program
- Majority of school boards now employ SLPs

What made the difference?

- Consistent message from families and professionals
- Partnerships with other organizations at the provincial level
- Clear message in terms the public and government can understand
- Well-developed business case
- Multi-level strategy - local, community, MPP and provincial level
- Pro-active advocacy strategy which has built relationships over time
- Strong positive approach which recognizes common goals and is respectful of individuals and the political process

Systemic Advocacy in the Special Education

- Participates in Ministry of Education consultations
- Provides input to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education through Community Collaboration process
- Nomination of Members of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- As per Regulation 181/98, SEAC members must be involved at the school board in:
 - Review of the Special Education Plan
 - Review of the special education budget
 - Ten meetings a year
 - Providing advice on special education program and services

Individual Family Support

- Provides individual parent phone support
- Regular Newsletters
- Parent Guide, Supporting Success for Students with Speech and Language Impairments
- Video, The Power of Parents
- Website with parent tip sheets and articles, many focused-on advocating for your child

For more information about OAFCCD please check the Website at: www.oafccd.com