



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders O.A.F.C.C.D. NEWSLETTER

May 2019

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Celebrating 25 Years
1994 - 2019

Speech-Language Pathologists— Important partners in helping Your child.

At OAFCCD our vision is that "All children will have access to a continuum of speech and language services to support their successful participation at home, in school and in the community."

To support this vision OAFCCD actively engages with the Ontario government to share concerns and find solutions to issues affecting the delivery of Speech and Language services. A key component of our message is that services should be delivered by registered Speech Language Pathologists (SLP's) who, through their training and experience, have the knowledge to personalize therapy for each child.

For parents, caregivers and educational partners who may have concerns about their child's development regarding speech and language, we believe that the best and most immediate support is their SLP.

The SLP is responsible for assessing your child's needs and developing a program to support their speech and language development. Parents are vital partners and your SLP can provide home programs and tips for helping your child. Ask your SLP if you have questions or concerns with your child's therapy plan.

Speech Language Pathologists support parents with materials and ideas so that lessons learned in therapy sessions can be practiced at home and in other aspects of an individual's daily living. At OAFCCD we have developed, with the support of SLPs, resources which can be found and referenced on our website www.oafccd.com. We invite and encourage all

parents, educational partners and caregivers to check out and use these resources.

Samples of resources available include:

Parent Tip Sheets - Promoting Literacy At Home
<http://www.oafccd.com/family-resources/parent-tip-sheets/>

Communicating for Success Calendars for Toddlers, Preschoolers and Kindergarten Age children
<https://connectability.ca/2010/09/28/communicating-for-fun-calendars/>

Tips for Improving Oral and Written Communication Skills
<http://www.oafccd.com/family-resources/tips-for-improving-oral-written-language-skills/>



May is Speech and Hearing Month

You can help OAFCCD by holding a fund raiser or awareness event during the month of May. Easy ideas for fund raisers include:

- Bake some treats and sell them to your co-workers or friends.
- Invite family, friends or co-workers to join you for a meal or coffee break and ask for donations to OAFCCD.
- Wash cars for donations to OAFCCD.

Most importantly, share your story about the impact of a communication disorder on your child. Most people are unaware of speech and language disorders and don't know what they are or what help is available. By building awareness of children with speech and language disorders and their challenges, it will be easier to make the case for more publicly funded speech and language services.



Reading to Learn: Helping your Child with Reading Comprehension

“**Learning to Read**” is a fundamental skill for academic success that is mostly developed in the primary grades, where the focus is on learning to recognize and decode the printed word. By grade three, the focus of reading instruction shifts to “**Reading to Learn**”. At this point most students will have developed fairly good reading fluency. Now, the focus shifts to reading comprehension, that is, understanding what is read in order to learn about a topic. There is a transition from teacher-directed learning to student-directed learning when much of the new information must be read and comprehended independently.

For students with a persistent difficulty learning language known as developmental language disorder (DLD), reading comprehension can be a challenge. As a preschooler, children with DLD may have had difficulty with understanding spoken language, especially spoken sentences that are longer and grammatically complex. They may have had trouble learning new words, and so have smaller vocabularies than other children. As children with DLD get older and enter school, their language weakness may also impact the ability to understand what is read.

Reading comprehension relies on a number of **language skills** that go beyond the ability to quickly and fluently decode and recognize words. Having a strong **vocabulary** and the ability to **associate words** is necessary for comprehending sentences and passages. Reading also builds vocabulary as we encounter words that are not typically used in conversational speech. **Background knowledge** helps readers comprehend, as familiarity with a topic will set the scene or context for making sense of the words, sentences and concepts. In addition, understanding **grammar and sentence structure** is important in language comprehension. These skills are used to make a mental framework for the sentence as it is read, and help to predict the next word as well as meaning of unfamiliar words. Understanding **punctuation** cues is important in

reading comprehension because they additional clues about the meaning of written language. For example, our rising voice tells the listener we’re asking a question when we talk, but in written language, we use a question mark.

Working memory also plays a key role in reading comprehension as the student needs to hold the information in mind as reading progresses until the information can be integrated across sentences and paragraphs to determine meaning. Some students with working memory difficulty end up reading sentences and paragraphs over and over because, they forget what they read at the beginning by the time they get to the end of the passage. **Reasoning and prediction** skills work together with memory to deepen a student’s ability to fully engage with the passages they are reading. Many of the questions asked by teachers require the ability to make conclusions and predictions and generate opinions based on what was read.

The roots of all of these language skills are in spoken language. Children gradually develop knowledge of grammar, syntax, reasoning, and prediction naturally through everyday listening and talking.

What can we do to help our children with reading comprehension?

1. **Start early.** Share books with your child and talk about what you read from an early age. Talk about how the story or passage makes you feel, predict what might happen, and connect what is in the book to your real life. Continue reading to your child when they start to read. Read books to them that are at a higher level than they can read on their own. Read a variety of materials together including magazines, flyers, cards, etc.
2. **Build background knowledge.** Talk about the main idea or topic of a book or article with your child before reading. If your child is starting a new unit/theme at school, read to them, look at pictures together and talk about your past experiences that may relate to this topic. Hands-on experiences like a visit to the park or woods or speaking with a grandparent may also build background knowledge.

Speech Services from the Children's Treatment Centres

- 3. Build new vocabulary.** Talk about new words so they will be easier to recognize when your child comes across them in print. Skim your child's books to find words that might be unfamiliar and talk about the meaning of the new words and other words that are similar. Write down the word and talk about the word parts.
- 4. Share the reading.** Take turns reading a paragraph at a time with your child. After each paragraph, talk about what you read. Children learn a lot about reading when they follow along when read to. Together, make drawings or notes about the characters and events, so that you can refer to them as you continue with the book on the next day.
- 5. Ask open-ended questions to stimulate reasoning and make connections.** Do this before, during and after reading. Examples are: What do you think will happen next? Why do you think Sharon said that? How did that make you feel? Can you think of a time when you felt the same way?
- 6. Continue to read to your child** as they grow older. Talk about what you read together and enjoy!
- 7. Check with your child's teachers to:**
 - make sure that your child is decoding and reading fluently enough for the grade-level reading material. If not, ask about additional help for these skills.
 - find out what strategies for reading you can reinforce at home.

The following link from the Ministry of Education has more great ideas for you:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/parentGuideLitEn.pdf

Over the past six months the former School Health Support rehabilitation services, including speech therapy services, have been transferred to the Children's Treatment Centres.

There are 21 Children's Treatment Centres (CTCs) in Ontario and you can find the names and locations through Empowered Kids Ontario, the provincial organization for CTCs. Check their website at: <http://empoweredkidsontario.ca/en/memberdirectory>

During the first year after the transfer, services will continue with the same service providers delivering the same services in schools. The referral process is unchanged and starts at the school. If you have concerns about your child's speech development you can talk to the classroom teacher and discuss whether a referral to the school health speech services at the CTC will be helpful. The referral process may include an assessment by the school board SLP to determine whether your child is eligible for CTC speech therapy services.

The Speech-Language Pathologists contracted by the CTCs can support students who have moderate to severe speech disorders, including:

- Articulation
- Fluency or stuttering
- Voice Disorders

OAFCCD is concerned that the speech therapy services that have been transferred to the CTCs have been underfunded for many years and many students are facing long waiting lists. Without additional funding it is likely that students will continue to wait for services.

OAFCCD also remains concerned about the continued separation of speech services from language services, often for the same student. OAFCCD continues to advocate for adequately funded and integrated speech and language services.

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

2019 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Your Membership Fees and donations are very important to the organization. Your fees will enable us to maintain parent support services. Please pay your membership today and also consider making a donation *NOTE: Fees may be waived on request.*

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ **E-Mail Address:** _____
(Please note that Newsletters and notices are distributed by e-mail only)

Phone Number: _____ **Days:** _____ **Evenings:** _____

If you are a Speech-Language Pathologist or other professional, please indicate your position and the name of the organization you work for.

Position: _____

Organization: _____

Are you a Renewing Member? _____ **Are you a New Member?** _____

I have enclosed a cheque for the following:

- \$25 One year Membership
- \$50 Two year Membership Fees
- Donation (Tax receipts issued for donations over \$10)

Cheques should be made payable to OAFCCD and mailed to:

OAFCCD, 933 Alice Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 2J9

Giving to OAFCCD is easy! You can send a cheque with your membership fee using the Membership Renewal Form or you can make an immediate donation on-line through CanadaHelps. Donations of \$25 or more will be recognized with a free membership for 2019. Donate at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/10833>



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