

## Introduction

The Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) has been helping families since 1994. OAFCCD supports families by providing information on communication disorders, where to find speech and language services, and how to work effectively with professionals, school staff and community agencies to get the support children and youth need to be successful.

This parent guide has been funded by the Ministry of Education Parent Engagement Office, and it is intended to provide information about speech and language impairments, and give parents the information and tips to help their child with speech and language problems succeed in school.

The guide is divided into 7 sections. Section 1 encourages parents to *Trust Their Instincts* and seek help if they are concerned about their child's speech or language development. Section 2 provides information on how to prepare and help their child with the *Transition to School* from Preschool Speech and Language Services. Section 3 includes tips on how to communicate with the school for effective partnerships. In sections 4 and 5, *Speech and Language in the Primary Grades* and *Speech and Language in the Junior and Intermediate Grades*, there is information on how speech and language impairments can impact learning. Section 6 addresses *Speech and Language Impairments in High School* and the additional challenges students may face as they prepare for post-secondary education or the workplace. The last section provides information on *Special Education*.

Children with speech and language impairments may need *Special Education* programs and services to be successful. In section 7 information is provided to parents that they may need to understand the special education system, to participate in the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP), or to prepare for the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process.

This guide has been written for families of children who have speech and/or language impairment as a primary consideration. Within the Ministry of Education the term impairment is used, while within the preschool and health sectors, the more commonly used term is disorder. These two terms mean essentially the same thing.

Many children with other disabilities, including Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Developmental Disability, a Physical Disability or a Learning Disability, may also have speech and language impairments that impact learning. The information in this guide may also be useful for these children.

The strategies and resources suggested in this guide have been developed and used successfully to improve communication and educational success by many parents of students with speech and language impairments. This guide can only provide an overview of some issues, and every effort has been made to identify additional sources of information or resources that may be helpful. We hope that you will find this guide useful!