

York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program celebrates its 1st Anniversary!

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Beyond Words

On September 1st of this year our program celebrated one year of service to the children, their families and the community of York Region.

We decided to put together a newsletter to let you know a little bit about who we are, what we've accomplished and what some our plans are for the coming year. This newsletter is being sent to all of our enrolled and wait list families, physicians, child care centres, family resource centres, agencies, libraries and anywhere we can think of that gets visited by children and their families.

Our first year was spent hiring staff, setting up 7 office locations, and developing working agreements with partner agencies and hospitals. Most importantly we began to chip away at an incredibly long wait list and were thrilled to work with literally hundreds of children and families. To date we have served over 2,000 children/families. In addition, all of our staff have been out in the community, doing presentations about our services, participating in screening clinics, offering parent education workshops and setting up our service display in busy locations so that people will find out about us.

In May, which was Speech and Hearing

Month, we launched a huge publicity campaign. Our goal was to enlist the support of all physicians, childcare centre staff and other public places in the early detection of possible speech and language problems and referral to our program. As a result, our colourful posters are in many locations across our region. We continued this public awareness effort with a mailing of growth charts to all child care centres and through the distribution of bookmarks to all public libraries.

Although it is necessary to make as many people aware of our program as possible, all of this publicity is not without consequence! We receive about 80 new referrals each month. We have a dedicated Intake Worker Marie Thomson-Mintz in partnership with Early Intervention Services of York Region. Marie does her best to return referral calls in 1 to 2 days. Marie is also responsible for maintaining a database for Early Intervention and ourselves. I hope you find this newsletter informative. If you have comments, concerns, compliments or ideas please call me at:

905-472-7373 ext.6558
Susan Sheffield
Manager York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program



Sharing Our Resource Library

The York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program has started to develop a library of books, journals, video and audiotapes as well as assessment kits. We are very grateful to the Learning Disabilities Association, York Region (LDA) for sharing their library space with us. The LDA is centrally located at the Loyal True Blue and Orange Home on Yonge Street, just north of Elgin Mills in Richmond Hill. If you'd like to browse in either the LDA library or ours the office hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Who are we...

We are:

- 19 Speech Language Pathologists
- 6 Communicative Disorders Assistants
- 1 Intake Worker
- 3 Secretaries
- 1 Clinical Coordinator
- 1 Manager

Our staff provide parent education workshops, assessments and therapy.

We also have contracts with several private practitioners who support our team.

Statistics

- ◆ Number of children receiving service: 1,257
- ◆ Number of children on the assessment wait list: 452
- ◆ Number of children on the treatment wait list: 184
- ◆ Average wait time for an assessment: 4 months

The Preschool Readiness and Enrichment Program (P.R.E.P.)

The York District School board in conjunction with Seneca College's Early Childhood Education (ECE) department, offer a school readiness program (The Preschool Readiness and Enrichment Program/PREP) that targets 3 year old children who are not attending child care centers and reside in the enrollment area for those schools offering PREP. The program enhances social and language development of preschoolers and assists in early identification of children with special needs. The consulting Speech Language Pathologist with the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program, provides information to caregivers regarding normal speech and language development and strategies for improving communication.

Acting as a liaison to the school and consulting school board SLP, she facilitates a smooth transition into the child's school as well. Recommendations are made as needed for further follow-up of speech and language needs of the child. All the children were able to benefit from these suggestions such as children who are just beginning to learn English as their second language. The program offers a supportive and enjoyable team approach.

Dory Goodlin
Speech-Language Pathologist



Speech and Language and Early Intervention TEAM WORK!

The marriage between Early Intervention Services of York Region (EIS) and Beyond Words, York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program (YRPSLP) is now a year old. Some of our SLPs and CDAs moved into the four EIS offices last October. The learning process for both agencies over the past year has enriched the services we collectively deliver. The development of trans-disciplinary team assessments is only one of several team efforts in servicing children and their families.

From intake to discharge, the team (EIS & YRPSLP) is able to jointly visit families and child care centres. We set goals, teach strategies to parents, facilitators and Early Childhood Educators to help further each child's development. Using joint visits and team meetings for goal setting and following through with learning strategies, along with parent education can only enhance what each service would provide on their own.

Nancy Jackson & Carol Costa
Communication Disorder Assistants

Parent Phonology Program ... just one of our Parent Education Workshops

The Parent Phonology Program is recommended to parents of children who have an articulation or phonological delay or disorder. It is a two part workshop. Each session is 1-1/2 hours in length.

The first session explains the differences between articulation and phonology, examine how and where sounds are produced (I.e., anatomy and physiology), and discusses the development of sounds so that parents can identify normal and atypical speech development.

The second session focuses on therapeutic techniques and personalizes the information for your child. Each parent is

provided with a list of phonological processes that their child is experiencing and provided with goal suggestions. A step by step approach is used to guide parents through working on the sounds at home. Suggestions are provided for keeping the process fun and rewarding for your child. The course provides an ideal opportunity for parents to ask questions and voice concerns.

Helen Turk-Litman & Kim Reyno-Briscoe,
Speech – Language Pathologists



STUDENTS / VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program is looking for students / volunteers at each of their seven locations. Day time and evening hours are available.

Students / volunteers work under the direction of the Speech Language Pathologists and Communicative Disorders Assistants and can benefit the program by:

- Preparing treatment materials

- Setting up treatment group space
- Assisting in treatment groups
- Providing translation to same language families

For more information, please contact Suzanne Reid at Markham Stouffville Hospital's Community Resource Department 905-472-7012.

Parent Fluency Workshop

The **Parent Fluency Workshop** is a group program designed as early intervention for children who stutter as soon as possible after the problem has been identified.

The program runs over four weeks and includes three interactive support group sessions, as well as an individual session where parents are videotaped using their newly learned techniques while interacting with their child. This videotape is evaluated by the parent together with the Speech Language Pathologist.

The **Parent Fluency Workshop** aims:

- To give parents information about the speech and language capacity of their child and matching their demands
- To empower parents as problem solvers and to improve their abilities to observe and change their behaviours and communication environment
- To develop fluency enhancing skills in parents
- To improve communicative interactions between caregivers and their disfluent child
- To give parents support, both from their peers and from the therapist

Six weeks after the program, the children are re-evaluated and a decision is made about whether further therapy is indicated for fluency and/or other concerns.

Marlene Green
Speech - Language Pathologist



Staff Feature

Marie Thomson-Mintz is a busy woman! As our intake coordinator for the Speech & Language Program and Early Intervention Services Marie receives 20 to 30 telephone calls a day plus faxes and letters of referral. Marie maintains a cheery voice listening to the concerns of parents, physicians and other sources of referrals. She maintains and updates the data base, creating statistical reports and files for staff, managers and ministry personnel.

Marie brings a wealth of early intervention and community experience to her position. She has her Masters Degree in Education, 12 years of experience as an Early Interventionist and has worked for Seneca College as coordinator and instructor for eight years.

Due to the volume of calls it will take 1 to 2 business days for Marie to return your call after you've left a detailed message.

ECE's/ Daycare Staff: [Need to know more information?](#)

As part of our commitment to community outreach, the YRPSLP provides inservices to staff of child care centres. The following topics are typically included in our presentation:

- * What is the YRPSLP
- * How to refer to the YRPSLP
- * Developmental norms for speech & language development (up to age 5)
- * When to be concerned about speech &/or language development
- * General techniques for language facilitation

Other topics are available at a centre's request.

To arrange an inservice for your centre, call our intake line at 1-888-703-KIDS.

Christine Hanson & Trisha Lawless
Speech - Language Pathologists

York Region Developmental Screening Clinics – a huge success

In May, the York Region Developmental Screening Clinics were launched in each of the Family Resource Centres throughout York Region. They were a tremendous success, with over 100 children being screened and approximately 40% of the children being referred for additional services from the contributing agencies. The highest rate of referral was for the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program!!!

We plan on continuing these clinics, with two provided at each Family Resource Centre throughout the year 1999 – 2000. The format of the clinics will remain the same: Families are screened on a first come, first serve basis. Families are provided with a refreshment and a tour of the Family Resource Centre by the centre staff. Children are able to interact with the centre's toys and activities, allowing for a non-stressful wait. Families may choose to meet and discuss their concerns and have their child interact with professionals

from a variety of agencies.

- * York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program – screen for pronunciation, stuttering, language, and hearing
- * Early Intervention Services – screen for overall development of the child
- * Blue Hills Child and Family Services – screen for behaviour and emotional difficulties
- * York Region Health Services – nurses are available to answer questions regarding sleep, nutrition and general health

Each screen takes approximately 15 minutes per professional. If a referral is necessary to any one of these agencies, the process is initiated at the time of the screen.

Look for our advertisements in the local papers, community facilities, and the Family Resource Centres or call the Health Connections line 1-800 361-5653.

Sara Koke
Clinical Coordinator

Our community locations across the region include...

- * Markham Stouffville Hospital, Markham
 - * Markham Early Intervention Services office, Markham
 - * Vaughan Early Intervention Services office, Woodbridge
 - * York Central Hospital, Richmond Hill
 - * Newmarket Early Intervention Services office, Newmarket
 - * York County Hospital, Newmarket
 - * Georgina Early Intervention Services office, Keswick
- We see children in many childcare centres and Family Resource Centres across the region and are very happy to be visiting in those locations.

What about the wait list...

With over 600 children/families waiting for an assessment or treatment we must do some creative problem solving in order to keep our wait to 4 months and get service in place for those who really need it.

Some of the things we are going to implement are:

- more treatment done in pairs and groups
- offer Parent Information Sessions to parents on our wait list
- offer 'premie', infant and toddler groups
- offer a variety of parent education workshops

The Hanen Program – Family – Focused Language Intervention

The Hanen Program is the first therapy we offer to parents of children of two years and older who are delayed in their language development to the extent of being nonverbal or using minimal language. The twelve week **Hanen Program** is based on principles of family-centred early intervention, where parents, as the child's primary caregivers, learn to become better language facilitators.

Led by our Hanen Certified Speech-Language Pathologists, the **Hanen Program**

- is an intensive group parent training program
- provides parents with information about the principles of language development
- focuses on changing the interactions between the parent and the child in order to enhance the child's need to communicate. Parents are taught the following language facilitation strategies:
 - * **allowing** their child to lead (by abandoning their own agenda and observing, waiting and listening)
 - * **adapting** the communication environment (e.g. by taking turns, improving eye contact, imitating, interpreting and reducing sentence length)
 - * **adding** information and experience
- emphasizes adult experiential learning, allowing parents to practice their strategies both within the group sessions and via homework, in their home environment
- provides parents with the opportunity to share their concerns and receive support from their peers

A crucial aspect of the **Hanen Program** is the use of videotapings to teach parents to apply their learning. During three individual sessions during the course, parents are videotaped interacting with their child. They immediately review this with the SLP and receive feedback on their use of the intervention strategies.

Marlene Green, Speech-Language Pathologist



What is a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)?

A SLP is someone with a degree in speech language pathology that is qualified to assess and treat disorders with speech, language, fluency and voice production.

What is a Communicative Disorders Assistant (CDA)?

A CDA is someone with a diploma that is qualified to treat speech and language disorders under the supervision of an SLP.

What is a speech disorder?

An inability to produce the sounds of the language in a way that is acceptable to others. Speech may be difficult to

understand due to the omission or incorrect production of sounds. This is called an articulation problem.

What is a language disorder?

A problem with language comprehension (understanding) and/or expression. May include difficulties with vocabulary and grammar.

What is a fluency disorder?

A disturbance in the normal flow and rhythm of speech, resulting in repetitions of sounds, syllables or words and hesitations. Also known as stuttering.

Intake 1-888-703-Kids (5437) or 830-4444 ext.2028

Susan Sheffield: Editor
Nancy Jackson: Design