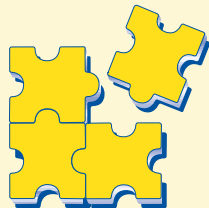


MAY IS SPEECH & HEARING MONTH

May 2000

beyond words

York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program



Spring Greetings to all! In our second issue of BEYOND WORDS we hope to provide you with valuable information about our program, news, numbers and more. We also hope that you will be better acquainted with who we are. Look for our staff photo and see if you recognize any of us! The month of May is SPEECH AND HEARING MONTH! We are celebrating this special month with a variety of activities including the launch of our new WEB SITE! Since our last newsletter in the early fall, staff have been very busy – developing new curriculums for our CHILDREN'S TREATMENT GROUPS and PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOPS and delivering them to our children and families. We have had positive feedback from our families about the GROUP experience, the skills learned by their children and the friendships made between families. This Newsletter will highlight several of them.

Behind the Scenes Support

The York Region Preschool Speech and Language System Advisory Committee

The BEYOND WORDS program was conceived and is now monitored by this Committee. Members are committed to participate in quarterly meetings and are available for sub Committee work as necessary. This group reviews program development, assists with decision making regarding the allocation of resources and program emphasis.

Membership is broad and representative of a number of sectors – parents, school boards, hospitals, children's mental health, early intervention services, health services, physicians, child care, learning disabilities and colleges.

Questions regarding this Committee and its work can be addressed to the Chair, Gary Ryan at (905) 895-4521 ext. 2165.



Our PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOPS have also been well received with accolades to our staff for their enthusiasm and presentation styles. We will tell you about them as well.

As the population of York Region explodes, we continue to be creative in meeting the growing waiting list for service. Partnering with other agencies in York Region has helped to stretch our resources and utilize the fabulous expertise that is in our community. This Newsletter will highlight several COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

Never hesitate to call with your questions, compliments and concerns. A parent, physician or child care that takes the time to tell me how pleased they are with our staff and/or the service they are receiving certainly makes my day!

Susan Sheffield, Manager
(905) 472-7373 ext.6558

A Special Thank You

A special thanks to the staff at MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL for all their diligent work towards launching this program. Almost every department within the hospital was somehow affected (and had their workload increased!) by this new initiative. Our program is now about 18 months old and their time and continued support is greatly appreciated. Everyone involved has contributed to our success!

Susan Sheffield

We're Moving & Improving!

Our York Central Hospital Speech Clinic is moving to a new location at 16th Avenue and Leslie Street. The move will take place on May 15th. We apologize for the temporary disruption in service, but we think you'll like the new space. There will be no parking fee, 3 sunny offices, a reception area and a classroom for our Parent Education Workshops.

Expressive Language Treatment Group

We have created a therapy group to increase children's early language and grammar skills. This treatment group is appropriate for children who are using more than 3 word sentences. The group can accommodate up to four children and is led by a Speech-Language Pathologist and/or a Communicative Disorders Assistant. The sessions may range from 45 minutes to 75 minutes in length as determined by the number of children enrolled. The treatment block will extend from 8 to 10 sessions and is available in various locations throughout York Region.

The group consists of weekly theme-based activities. Depending on the needs of the individual children, the group may target grammatical concepts such as pronouns (e.g., I, we, they), prepositions (e.g., in, on, under), early concepts (e.g., big/little, on/off), and verb endings (e.g., past and present tense). In addition, goals may include increasing sentence length, building vocabulary, and enhancing social communication skills. Children who are eligible for this treatment group will receive a letter in the mail with an offer for a treatment time.

Helen Bernstein, SLP & Jenn Patterson, CDA

Community Collaboration in In Georgina

The York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program and Early Intervention Services together offer an informal playgroup on Monday mornings at the Georgina Hub. A team of an Early Interventionist and a Communicative Disorders Assistant, with visits from the Speech Language Pathologist and the Occupational Therapist facilitate the group and implement goals for each child's developmental and speech and language needs.

Each week the children explore a theme (e.g. farm animals, seasons, etc.) through creative art activities, sensory exploration bins, playdough, puzzles, books and toys. They quickly come to anticipate snack and circle time, a chance to interact with the other children and wrap up the morning. The Sleeping Bunny song, If You're Happy and You Know It, along with other action songs have the children hopping, clapping and singing along until the Goodbye Song signals the end of the morning.

The time at the group also offers parents the chance to ask questions, talk about parenting issues and socialize with other parents and staff. Eight weeks fly by and the families are always sad to see the end of the group. We are looking forward to many more successful playgroups in the future! Many thanks to the Georgina Hub for letting us use their wonderful space!!

Tracey Karsten, CDA

Summer Camps for Our Kids

This summer we plan to have Summer Camps running in all of our locations across York Region. These innovative Camps will focus on encouraging speech and language development and social skills in a fun and creative way. Four to six children will enroll for a 2 week, hour and a half to two hour daily program. They will be run by our SLP's and CDA's as well as our capable Volunteers and Students. Stay tuned for details!

Parent Information Sessions

In December 1999, the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program began to provide Parent Information Sessions to parents of children who have recently been referred to our program. This 2-hour workshop is offered once a month and informs parents of the scope of services provided by our program.

Topics discussed in the presentation include procedures and timelines for receiving assessments and therapy, information on our many parent education courses, and detailed information about our program. In addition, parents receive answers to commonly asked questions. Parents also receive an information package, which includes handouts on topics such as normal speech and language development, and tips for promoting speech and language development.

To date, approximately 33 families have attended these sessions. The following Parent Information Sessions will be taking place between the months of April and June 2000:

April 20, 2000 – in Newmarket

April 24, 2000 – in Richmond Hill

May 15, 2000 – in Georgina

May 29, 2000 – in Richmond Hill

June 22, 2000 – in Newmarket

June 26, 2000 – in Richmond Hill

If you are interested in attending a Parent Information Session, please call Marie Thomson-Mintz, Intake Worker, at 1-888-703-KIDS (5437). Families will be provided with locations and contact numbers for the upcoming sessions. The Parent Information Sessions are a great opportunity for parents to find out about our program, learn about speech and language development, and meet other families. Hope to see you there!

Laurissa Abric, CDA & Janine Francis, CDA

Community Collaboration with the “You Make a Difference” Program

In November 1999 we launched our first “You Make the Difference” Program (YMTD) in partnership with Rose of Sharon (a York Region agency that supports young mothers). The YMTD program is a prevention program aimed at teaching speech & language facilitation strategies to young mothers whose children may be at risk for speech & language difficulties. It helps parents improve their interaction skills with their young children to provide a nurturing environment and assist their children in developing their speech and language skills. Giving the children support in the early stages of their language development may help prevent future difficulties.

The mothers and tots attended 8 evening YMTD sessions held in conjunction with their normal “supper club” evenings sponsored by Rose of Sharon at the Family Hub in Keswick. The blending of the two programs worked very well as Rose of Sharon provided us with the meeting space, child care, support staff and great suppers! We had great fun getting to know all the beautiful babies and toddlers and their Moms. Each week the program highlighted a different interaction strategy. We watched demonstration video tapes of the techniques and the Moms shared ideas on how they could implement the techniques while playing with their children. Then each mother & child pair was videotaped in action and coached on ways to engage their tots and keep the interactions fun while encouraging language development!

Although the Moms had some reservations at first about being videotaped, they were all pro’s by the end of the class and were happy to have a great videotape of their child to keep as a memento. The feedback they gave us at the end of the class was very positive. They all enjoyed the sessions and felt they had gained skills in their interactions with their children.

We enjoyed getting to know the Moms & tots as well as some of the great staff at Rose of Sharon. Many thanks to all the staff at Rose of Sharon who helped make this program a success. We look forward to working with them for future YMTD programs!

Carol Teal, SLP & Nancy Jackson, CDA

YRPSLP Service Cycle

YRPSLP has experienced a substantial increase in the number of referrals since October, 1999. We now currently average approximately 140 new referrals a month! The word is out, and we are overwhelmed and ‘Beyond Words’ with the response we have had to our new program!!

The YRPSLP continues to value the opportunity to meet families as soon as possible after the referral. We have, therefore, introduced a Parent Information Session that is open to all newly referred families within one month of their referral date. This session outlines the services available through our program, family participation, developmental norms, and language facilitation techniques. Leaving this session, parents have a better idea of their child’s needs and have a few ideas on how to help while they wait for an assessment.

We continue to strive for a maximum wait of 4 months for assessment. In fact, we have designated particular weeks within the year where the entire emphasis of all our speech language pathologists is assessment. At the end of the assessment session, parents are provided with immediate feedback as to their child’s skills and are provided with a home program that is more individualized to the child’s needs. The speech language pathologist is also able to enroll the families in to one of our many parent education workshops to supplement the home program.

For many children, this level of service is all that is required or appropriate given their age, attention span, severity of speech and language delay/disorder.

Home programs are revised every 1 to 3 months as the child progresses.

Other children will require direct therapy, either with a Speech Language Pathologist or Communicative Disorders Assistant. Treatment is often carried out in the context of a small group of children (2 to 4 participants) to allow for children to learn from each other, practice with each other, and to have fun!! Treatment is generally available to families approximately 3 months after their parent education session and is provided in blocks of 8 to 10 weeks.

Once the child is attending a junior kindergarten program with either of the two York Region school boards, the transition to school speech services begins. The Speech Language Pathologist in the school is informed of the students’ speech and language needs, and they will where necessary, support the students and teachers around these needs while the child continues to receive direct therapy from the YRPSLP. The transition process from the YRPSLP is not complete until the spring or summer of the child’s junior kindergarten year to allow for optimal speech and language planning for senior kindergarten.

Our Service Cycle:

From Referral to Parent Information Session to Assessment & Home Program to Parent Education Workshops then Rechecks or Consults or Direct Therapy Blocks then Transition Process and Discharge.



Staff Feature

We thought this time around you could have a look at us! This picture was taken in December. We are collectively a group of people ranging in age from 22 to 40 something. We have interests that range from running to guitar playing to cat collecting to gardening. Ask staff a little about ourselves. We are an eclectic group!

The Paediatric Developmental Assessment Clinic (PDAC) Markham Stouffville Hospital

The philosophy of the PDAC is to work together with children and their families to identify areas of need and assist families with finding the resources they need to enhance their child's development.

Through a comprehensive assessment of the child, the team including the family, gains an understanding of the child's strength and needs. With this understanding, a plan is created to facilitate further development.

Who makes up the Assessment Team?

- Occupational Therapist
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Social Worker
- Developmental Paediatrician
- Psychologist
- Family Who is eligible?

Children between the ages of 18 months and 6 years (prior to Grade 1 entry) that reside in York Region. Children must present with three areas of developmental concern.

Areas of Assessment include:

- motor skills/sensory integration/sensory processing
- play/cognitive skills
- speech and language skills
- behaviour
- social skills
- visual/perceptual skills

For more information or to make a referral:

Call (905) 472-7534 or Fax (905) 472-7535

Submitted by: Deirdre Beckerman, SLP

Social Communication Disorders Parent Education Workshop

What is it?

Social communication refers to skills such as the ability to share the focus of an activity with another person, making and maintaining eye contact, taking turns, and intentionally trying to communicate with others. Development of social communication also includes being able to communicate for a variety of reasons such as requesting (e.g. items, attention, help, more), labeling, greeting, asking and answering questions. These skills are an important component of language development as well as the development of play skills and peer interactions.

Parent Workshop:

The Social Communication Disorders Workshop is run approximately four times each year on an as needed basis. This workshop consists of three information sessions and one individualized videotaping and training session. Families will be provided with information about how and why their children are communicating. Strategies to facilitate language development in children with social communication difficulties will also be provided. Interested families are encouraged to discuss enrollment with their Speech-Language Pathologist.

Christine Hanson, SLP & Trisha Strong, SLP



Editor: Susan Sheffield