



Information Update May 2005

MAY IS BETTER SPEECH AND HEARING MONTH

Sunday May 29- Canada's Wonderland will be sponsoring a special day to celebrate with a discounted rate for an all day pass ! Come join the fun! For more details please contact Rhonda Jacobson Cherry at (416) 920-3676 ext. 21 or rjacobson@osla.on.ca

A WORD FROM MANAGEMENT

2005 will be a great year for Beyond Words! We received new funding that has enabled us to hire several new Speech Language Pathologists. We will gradually be returning services that we had to withdraw over the past few years. York Region continues to experience tremendous population growth, so while we anticipate our wait list decreasing it is a constant challenge to deliver the intensity of services we'd like to.

Beyond Words has an exciting new partnership with York Neighbourhood Services. We have contracted for interpretation services for our children and families who are not English speaking. When there is a suspicion of a speech and language concern, children will be able to be assessed in their first language. Some follow-up therapy and parent education can be provided as necessary.

ACQUIRING TWO LANGUAGES

If my child is language delayed, should I only speak one language?

There is no research evidence to indicate that children with a language delay should only be exposed to one language. There is research that supports that learning more than one language can improve a child's language and learning ability. Children who are strongly proficient in their first language will more likely become strongly proficient in English.

One of the common suggestions that families may be given when speaking with well meaning professionals is to be told "just speak English, because that is the language of school". The problem is that if the parents are not fluent in English, the child ends up getting a language model that is not complete in either language. Children learn language best when they are exposed to the language in all daily situations (play, books, music, interactions with many relatives), when the people modeling the language are fluent in that language and when there is no mixing of two different languages within sentences.

How do I teach my child 2 languages?

There are several ways to teach a child 2 languages:

Simultaneous learning - child learns 2 or more languages at the same time. This can be done in a couple of ways: either one parent speaks one language while other parent speaks second language OR both parents speak both languages in daily routines. Each parent should be careful not to mix the languages in sentences when speaking to their child. The goal is to provide a good grammatical model of each language, not a mixed grammar.

Sequenced learning - child learns one language then is exposed to a second language after first language is mastered (for example, child speaks first language at home, then goes to school and begins to learn English).

Did you know...

Children raised with more than one language will be more likely to go on to develop a larger vocabulary, may have a better understanding of how words sound and rhyme (which helps with reading and writing skills) and will have access to more than one culture.

This information is adapted from Watson, C. and Cummins, J (1999) "Some Things to Know About Children Acquiring Two Languages", Wig Wag, and Toronto Preschool Speech and Languages Services handout "What you should know about a child acquiring two languages".

WHAT IS ECHOLALIA?

It is not unusual for children who are developing language to imitate what they hear. In fact, this is one way that children learn to use language. Some children, however, particularly those with social communication disorders, have a less typical way of imitating language. These children process language in chunks, rather than breaking it down word by word, which results in some children being able to repeat much longer words, phrases or sentences than they can generate on their own. There are 2 main types of echolalia:

1. Immediate Echolalia: The child repeats what is said/heard right afterwards, or within two conversational turns. For example, an adult says, "Do you want some juice?" and the child says "Do you want some juice?" rather than answering the question. Sometimes, the child will change the structure slightly, which is called "mitigated echolalia".
2. Delayed Echolalia: The child repeats language at a significantly later time. It can be pure echolalia or mitigated. Recitations of videos is an example of delayed echolalia

Echolalia differs from more typical imitation in that it serves a communicative function for a child who cannot create novel language. For example, the child who repeats "Do you want juice?" while reaching for the juice is using this phrase to indicate "yes" although s/he is not yet able to use this word. Similarly, the child who says, "I'm gonna get you" to initiate a chasing game with a parent has echoed the language used by the parent within a favourite game rather than generating new words to ask to play this game.

(based on Prizant & Rydell, 1993)

Lanni Zinberg-Swartz, Speech-Language Pathologist, Richmond Hill Early Intervention Services

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SPEECH AND LANGUAGE INTERVENTION

The York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program values parents' involvement in the treatment process and thus often recommends that a family attend a parent education course relevant to their child's needs as the first component to the therapy process. The following is a brief summary of some of the courses we offer. Most courses include videotaping sessions which provide families with the opportunity for individualized practice with a Speech-Language Pathologist.

Early Language Facilitation - Based on The Hanen Program®: This course focuses on families with children who are experiencing receptive and expressive language delays and who are saying few to no words. The focus of the program is to teach parents what to look for in their child's communication, and to provide parents with techniques that allow for the further development of language skills.

Fluency: This training program provides parents with instruction in the identification of stuttering and its contributing factors. Parents will learn fluency facilitation strategies and have an opportunity to discuss and practice their application with other families.

Let's Make Sounds: A workshop for caregivers of children who are experiencing difficulties making sounds. The workshop covers how sounds are made and how to work with children to enhance speech production. Parents will receive specific goals and game ideas for take home practice.

More Than Words - The Hanen Program® : A training program for families of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or children with other social communication difficulties. This program incorporates specific strategies to enhance the learning of children with ASD. Parents will learn how to help their children improve in each of the following skill areas: attention, imitation, comprehension, play, social interaction, creating predictability through routines.

Target Words - The Hanen Program® : This training program is designed for parents of children who are late to talk, but have no other concerns. Parents, with the guidance of the Speech Language Pathologist, choose and target 10 words at a time that they wish their child would learn to say. The sessions provide families with activities, experiences and modelling techniques to teach these words.