



# ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATION DISORDERS O.A.F.C.C.D. NEWSLETTER

September 2001

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## DELISTING OF AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

### A Major Concern for OAFCCD Members

At the end of June the Ministry of Health provided four days notice that a number of services were to be delisted from the OHIP Schedule of Benefits effective July 1, 2001. The delisted services included Hearing Tests and Hearing Aid Assessments for children and adults. The only Audiology services that will continue to be funded are the following:

1. Services provided by an Audiologist directly employed by a hospital.
2. Service of an Audiologist employed and practising on the premises of an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist.
3. Services provided by an Audiologist employed or contracted in an alternative funding arrangement that does not involve billing OHIP.

Since July 1<sup>st</sup> there has been a large public outcry and the delisting was temporarily delayed until August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The Board of OAFCCD is very concerned that the government's decision will restrict access to publicly funded Audiology services and force families of children with a hearing impairment to pay for all hearing tests and hearing aid assessments. This decision will also impact on children with communication disorders, as many require a hearing test as part of their speech and language assessment.

The President of OAFCCD has sent a letter to Minister of Health, Tony Clement. We are also working with other consumer groups to raise awareness of this issue. We would also like your help. **Please send a letter to the Minister and a copy or a separate letter to your local MPP.** I believe that the government does listen to the people and will respond to a letter writing campaign.

I have prepared a sample letter for you to send to the Minister. However, a personal letter with information on your child, or a story about your experience of these services will have much more impact. **Regardless of whether you write your own letter or send the sample letter, it is most important that you let the government know you disagree with the delisting of Audiology services.**

#### Dr. Andy Leeper, 1942 - 2001

Dr. Andy Leeper, husband of Genese Warr-Leeper, incoming President of OAFCCD, died on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001 while visiting his mother in Pennsylvania. Dr. Leeper was a Speech-Language Pathologist who was internationally recognized as an expert in voice disorders associated with Cranio-Facial Anomalies. Dr. Leeper was a Professor at the Department of Communicative Disorders at the University of Western Ontario. He had two sons, Rob and T.J., and he will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

As a result of Dr. Leeper's death the workshop by Genese Warr-Leeper at the OAFCCD Annual General Meeting was cancelled. Genese has also delayed filling her position as President until the Fall meeting of the Executive.

#### This issue features:

**Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD)** - Effects of CAPD and Strategies to Help Children Cope, Page 2

**Unscrambling Scrambled Speech** - Warning Signs and Treatment Considerations for Developmental Apraxia of Speech (Insert)

**Update on School Services** - What is happening at the Ministry of Education, Page 3

**Annual Membership Renewal Form** (Insert)

# CENTRAL AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDERS

## What is Central Auditory Processing Disorders?

Some children appear to understand what is said to them in a one-to-one quiet situation, but have significant difficulty with listening or comprehending auditorially presented information where there is competing noise. Their hearing sensitivity is normal but they can't focus their attention on verbally presented material. It is that they can't listen, not won't listen. It is a physical problem not a behavioural one.

## Effects of Central Auditory Processing Disorders:

- The child may not be able to tell the information from the noise when they are in classroom situations. They have difficulty selectively attending to the message or if it was not heard clearly, they may not be able to "fill in" the parts they missed.
- If two messages are presented at once the child may lose both messages or mix them together.
- The child may become "auditorially exhausted" quickly and not be able to focus for long periods of time.
- Significant central auditory processing difficulties may co-occur with academic problems and/or peer relationship problems.
- Adaptations of the environment, modifications by the speaker and strategies for the child may aid perception and memory for auditory information.

## Environmental Modifications:

- Decrease background or competing noise as this causes a great deal of difficulty for the child's ability to understand what is said. This includes background talking, the radio or TV, and mechanical noises such as dishwashers, etc.
- For school work, provide a quiet desk or work space with few distractions. Some children benefit from having ear plugs to reduce the noise.
- Carpet or sound proof the working environment.
- Allow only one person to talk at a time.
- If your child has one better ear, position him so that the better ear is towards the teacher or the speaker.

## Speaker Strategies:

- Be sure you have the child's attention before you speak. This can be done by calling their name, saying "listen" or touching them on the shoulder.
- Introduce the topic (i.e. we are going to talk about our trip on Friday) and then give the details.
- Use gestures and visual cues to aid comprehension.
- Slow your speech rate and pause before important points.
- Use short simple direct commands. If they are long or complicated then break them into smaller parts for easier comprehension..
- Allow extra time for the child to process the question, and if they don't understand repeat or rephrase.
- Occasionally check to determine if child comprehended the message.
- Use cued recall to aid comprehension (i.e. sentence completion).

## Child / Listener Strategies:

- Face the speaker so the facial expressions and lip movements of the speaker can be seen.
- Make sure the child is not looking into the light (i.e. in front of a window) so that the speaker's face can be seen easily.
- Have the child re-auditorize or repeat the information.
- Teach the child to ask for repetitions or explanations if they don't hear or understand.

Counselling and or discussing the disorder with the child is helpful. They need to understand the problem and the strategies in order to use them appropriately.

### **More Articles on the Website**

Visit the OAFCCD Website at [www.cyberus.ca/oafccd](http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd) to view more Parent Resources and OAFCCD Position Papers, as well as links to many other speech and language sites. For those without access to the computer we will still be happy to mail you a copy of any of our resources. Just call Alison (519-842-9506) and let her know your issues and she will send you a selection of articles.

## Update on School Services

The news on school speech and language services was quite depressing at the end of the school year. Despite increased funding for school boards, including extra dollars for special education, a number of school boards reduced special education personnel including Speech - Language Pathologists and Educational Assistants.

There were several reasons for the cuts, one of the key problems being under funding of special education. As evidence of the under funding, a significant number of Boards have spent more on special education than the SEPPA and ISA Grants generated. This money has been taken from other areas of budget and when faced with this years rising fuel costs and new salary agreements, Boards have been forced to reduce spending on special education.

In addition, some of the very large school boards, such as Ottawa and Toronto, have had their annual funding reduced as a result of provincial averaging. These Boards have been faced with many difficult decisions as they reduce spending on special education.

Another key challenge is that there are no provincial standards, or guidelines, on what speech and language services a school board should provide. The services available vary between Boards, depending on resources and the importance that the administration placed on such services. In addition, the availability of Speech-Language Pathologists has become a problem, with competition between the preschool, health and education sectors. Recruitment in rural and northern areas has become a serious issue, with many unfilled positions.

**OAFCCD has long advocated for a designated ratio of Speech-Language Pathologists to students (OAFCCD Recommends 1 SLP to 2250 students) and we still believe that without strong direction from the Ministry of Education regarding a ratio and protected funding services will continue to be inadequate and inconsistent.**

The last year has seen several key initiatives from the Ministry, including the Provincial Standards Project and the review of ISA Profiles. Unfortunately, the Standards project seems to have ground to a halt. A Volunteer Resource Group, which included representatives from

OAFCCD and OSLA, met several times and provided input to the Ministry but as yet the draft Standards have not been seen by the Volunteer Resource Group or released for consultation. The new ISA Process and Profiles have been released but there has been no change in the fact that students with severe speech and language disorders do not qualify for ISA Grants, unless they also meet the criteria for other Exceptionalities. On the positive side the ISA Process has been improved with students only having to qualify once. This should significantly reduce the paperwork and allow special education resources to be devoted to service and meeting the needs of students.

OAFCCD has a number of Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) reps who represent you to the school board, and a Provincial Co-ordinator who regularly attends consultation meetings with the Ministry of Education. **If you have any concerns about services at your school, call the SEAC rep or Alison Morse at (519)842-9506.**

### Developmental Apraxia of Speech

Kerry Erle has written a useful article for parents "**Unscrambling Scrambled Speech - Warning Signs and Treatment Considerations for Developmental Apraxia of Speech**" which is included as an Insert with this Newsletter. Kerry notes that there are many excellent sources of support for families of children with Developmental Apraxia of Speech (DAS) on the Internet. Some of the most impressive sites are listed below:

- ★ Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America: [www.apraxia-kids.org](http://www.apraxia-kids.org)
- ★ Cherab Foundation: [www.apraxia.cc](http://www.apraxia.cc)
- ★ Dr. Nancy Kaufman's, expert in DAS,: [www.kidspeech.com](http://www.kidspeech.com).
- ★ Prompt Therapy Institute: [www.promptinstitute.com](http://www.promptinstitute.com).
- ★ Expressive Communication Help Organization: [www.apraxiaontario.homestead.com](http://www.apraxiaontario.homestead.com)

#### **About the Author:**

Kerry Erle is a speech-language pathologist with over eighteen years of clinical experience. She is president of London Speech and Language Centre, a nationally recognized clinic offering speech-language pathology and academic support services for children and adults.

## COMING EVENTS

**Oakville/Windsor** - *PECS Picture Exchange Communication System*, Oakville, September 28 - 29, and Windsor, October 1-2, 2001. Training program for parents and professionals, Fee \$400. **Contact: Four Points Inc., (905)849-8965**

**Toronto** - “*What you need to know about the IEP Process*” (Sept. 29) and “*Life after High School*” (Nov. 15) family workshops at Bloorview-McMillan Centre. **Contact: Pam Kearns (416)425-6220 Ex. 3310**

**Guelph** - “*Really Effective Education: a Primer on Public Education in Ontario*”, October 13, 2001. Featuring Charles Pascal, Dr. Jean Hewitt, Annie Kidder, Carol Yaworski and Mitchell Beer. **Contact: Citizens for Public Education (519)836-6973**

**Toronto** - “*The Faces of Deafness*”, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Session for families and professionals looking at the challenges of meeting the needs of children with hearing impairments. Cost: \$60 - \$250. **Contact: Michelle Colero, Canadian Hearing Society, (416)928-2500 Ext. 356V**

**Toronto** - “*From Research into Practice*” November 1-2, 2001. Conference on the latest research in learning disabilities at the Metro Convention Centre. **Contact: Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario at - (416)929-4311 Ex. 56**

**Mississauga** - *Animated Literacy Workshop* by Jim Stone, November 5-6. **Contact: Bonnie Chappell (780)464-3897**

**Ajax** - *Elizabeth Hubley, Educational Audiologist*, Saturday, Nov. 10, 2001, 1-3pm. Free workshop covering *Connections between hearing, speech, language and learning*, and *Central Auditory Processing*. **Contact: Speech, Language & Learning Centre (905)686-4800.**

**London** - “*Preparing Students for Provincial Testing*”, November TBA, Presentation will consider Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 testing and the Grade 10 Test of Reading and Writing. **Contact: Carol Hawthorne, (519)474-0979.**

**Chatham** - *Parent Workshop on Special Education*, Nov. 17, 2001. Presentation by Lindsay Moir, **Contact: Mary Lou Kearney (519)436-0025.**

**Smith Falls** - *Educational Consultation Workshops* with Lindsay Moir, Sat. November 24, 2001, 9am-5pm. Topics include Educational Advocacy Training, Current Issues in Special Education, Transition to School. **Contact: Judy Nagle, Language Express, 1-888-503-8885 or (613)283-2742.**

## Group Programs

**London** - *Workshops for Parents of LD/ADD Children, Tuesday evenings, Fall 2001.* Topics to be covered include, *Improving Language Skills, How to be an Effective Advocate, School Issues, Improving Organizational Skills, Assessment and Your Child.* (\$15 per workshop) **Contact: Carl Sinclair, Learning Disabilities, London Region, (519)438-6213**

**Ajax** - *Children and Youth Programs, Saturday Sessions* include *Language to Literacy, Reading Readiness* (Primary and Junior), *Social Skills* (Primary, Junior and Youth), *Daily Living Skills - Money Management.* **Contact: Speech, Language & Learning Centre (905)686-4800.**

**London** - “*More than just Talking*” and “*Cracking the Code - Enhance Early Literacy Skills*”, (London) Free monthly parent workshops are offered regularly. **Contact: London Speech and Language Centre, Bonnie Riddolls (519)642-7370**

**London** - “*Parenting the Attention Deficit Hyperactive (ADHD) Child*”, Weekly workshops starting October 11, 7-9pm. Designed to help parents increase their knowledge about ADHD and develop specialized strategies. **Contact: Thames Valley District School Board, Linda Radford, (519)452-2191**

**York Region** - “*Parenting the LD/ADHD Child*”, “*Parent Support Group*” and “*Social Skills Program*”. offered by the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region. **Contact: (905)884-7933**

## **Annual Membership Renewal!**

If you have not yet paid your annual membership, the **fees are now due**. A renewal Form has been included with this Newsletter. Please mail your cheque and form. Every membership counts. (Remember membership fees will be waived upon request.)

### **OAFCCD VIDEO**

OAFCCD has been funded by the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities of Canada to produce our first video. The video features families sharing stories about the impact of communication disorders on their children and the benefits of getting services from Speech - Language Pathologists.

The video provides information about communication disorders and their treatment with real stories about children. The video highlights the lifelong impact of some communication disorders and the need for services at all ages. It strongly emphasizes the need for Speech - Language Pathology services to be provided to school age children with communication disorders.

Copies of the video can be obtained for \$25.00 (including shipping and handling) or rented for a fee of \$10.00 per month. To order a copy, please call OAFCCD at (519)842-9506 or fax (519)842-3228.