



Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

OAFCCD NEWSLETTER

November 2020

933 Alice Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 2J9 Phone: 519-290-1763 Website: www.oafccd.com

COVID-19 How is it impacting you and your child?

OAFCCD is concerned about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on speech and language services and on the services and supports available to children with communication disorders.

We would like to hear from you as parents and caregivers of children with communication disorders. How has this year been different for your child? What are your experiences with accessing services? What are issues and challenges that have come up? Do you have positive stories to share in the face of these circumstances? Your input will inform our advocacy efforts and help us to support your needs.

We have developed a short survey for parents and we would appreciate you completing the survey and sending it to Trudy Counter Trudy@oafccd.com. Trudy will be summarizing the information and we share the information with members. Personal information will be kept confidential.

Your responses will be helpful to OAFCCD as we advocate for the most effective services to help your child in these unusual circumstances.



Trudy Counter Board Member of OAFCCD

Hello OAFCCD members! My name is Trudy and I have been an OAFCCD Board member since 2013.

In 2017 I retired from practice as a Speech Language Pathologist. This has allowed me more time to dedicate to OAFCCD and the world of communication disorders. During my career, that spanned 34 years, I had the pleasure of working in a community hospital setting with adults and preschoolers: and in a school board setting.

I have been an advocate for increased speech, language and audiology services for children for my entire career. I have advocated at both the local and provincial levels through the Ontario Association of Speech Language Pathologists (OSLA) and Association of Chief Speech-Language Pathologists in Ontario District School Boards (ACSLP). As a manager of hospital-based and later school-based services, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to actively participate in many planning tables to represent families of children with Communication Disorders.

Speech-Language Pathologists: Please share the survey with families by printing copies or e-mailing copies to the families of children you support.

During my work in Wellington and Dufferin Counties, I was thrilled to see the expansion of preschool and adult Speech and Language and Audiology services in the region. In addition, much needed services for child well-being and mental health were expanded. The positive outcomes, of various proposals, were the direct result of parents and caregivers sharing their children's personal stories. Sharing your story is very powerful and is the best way to effect change.

Please send me a short note or a personal story about your experience with speech and language services. A story about the benefit of speech and language services, as well as the challenges you have faced, can help to improve speech and language services. I look forward to hearing from you and working on your behalf. We are stronger together and as a Board Member, please know that your feedback energizes us! Sincerely, Trudy

OAFCCD on Social Media – Spread the Word

Hello everyone! My name is Theresa Pham and I am a graduate student at Western University in the combined MCISc/PhD Speech-Language Pathology program, supervised by Dr. Lisa Archibald. I am interested in understanding the science behind language learning and do this through research looking at how performance in verbal tasks (such as word or sentence recall) is influenced by language and working memory skills, which is the ability to hold information in the mind. I hope to translate the knowledge I gain from research into practice as a future speech-language pathologist.

My role at OAFCCD is to use social media to spread the word about OAFCCD. I do this by creating exciting and engaging content in text, image, and sharing resources and supports we have available on the website. I am engaging with people and families from Ontario as well as speech-language pathologists, teachers, and other professionals on social media. Beyond helping people understand speech and language disorders, I use social media to raise awareness about different disorders that also affect communication. This will draw more attention to OAFCCD as an organization that can help any child with a communication disorder.

Social media is a great way to quickly and easily attract attention, but I need your help to continue to grow our online presence!

If you haven't done so already, please follow us on social media:



Then like, share, and retweet our posts! This will really help spread the word and increase our engagement with the larger community. We have already reached people from all over the world – one of our Facebook posts was shared by someone in the US and our Twitter posts have even reached Australia!!! Thank your for sharing and spreading the word about OAFCCD!

If you have any ideas about what I should post next, please reach out to me at Theresa@oafccd.com

Tips for helping children with speech and language skills at home during COVID-19 pandemic

Access to speech and language services has been significantly impacted by the restrictions imposed during the pandemic. Speech and language services in the community and at school boards have responded by enhancing the resources for families on their websites and by providing virtual therapy sessions.

Getting the Services You Need

If you have a concern about your child's speech and language development seek help. If your child is preschool you can contact the local preschool speech and language program by checking the contact information at: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/earlychildhood/speechlanguage/index.aspx>

If your child is attending school, either in person or in remote learning, speak to the classroom teacher. The teacher has access to school board services and can develop a plan to help your child.

Website Resources

Since the start of restrictions, related to COVID-19, speech and language services have tried to respond by increasing the information for parents on how they can help their child at home. The following website resources are just a few examples of the tip sheets, videos, webinars and other parent resources that have been developed to support the development of speech and language skills.

First Words - Preschool Speech and Language Program in Ottawa – The program staff have responded by making sure that families can still contact them if they have concerns and by providing webinars and other resources for families. Webinars topics start with, Module I: Act early: know the signs to Module 8: The impact of screen time on language development. Check the resources at: <https://www.firstwords.ca/webinars>

Durham Preschool Speech and Language Services – Grandview Kids – Tips for parents in a downloadable book, called Growing with Communication - A Speech and Language Guide for Parents with Children Under 5 Years of Age. Check this and other resources at: https://grandviewkids.ca/wp-content/uploads/Growing-with-Communication_ENGL_pg71v2-2.pdf

School Boards

Many school boards have resources for families of children with special needs. These are just a few:

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board – As technology has become more and more present in our lives, “screen time” has begun to dominate leisure time and social interactions for some children. Resource so this website includes:

- Screen Time and Talk Time: Considerations for Families
- 50 Screen-Free Ways to ‘UNPLUG’ and COMMUNICATE

Website at: <https://www3.dpcdsb.org/programs-services/special-education/support-services/speech-language-services/speech-language-services>

Thames Valley District School Board: - The school board Speech - Language Pathologists have enhanced the information available to families on the website. This link will take you to a section on story telling, and resources include a calendar with everyday activities that will promote your child’s story telling skills and tips on Reading Together:

<https://sites.google.com/gotvdsb.ca/tvdsbspeechlanguageservices/early-literacy/story-skills>

Toronto Catholic District School Board - The Speech and Language Department staff have developed the following resources to support parents whose child presents with challenges in the areas of speech, language and literacy. They include tips on promoting speech and language skills through story telling, reading together and writing stories in multiple languages.

<https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/Speech/Services-and-Programs/schoolservices/Pages/Resources.aspx>

OAFCCD Membership Renewal

You can help OAFCCD by paying your 2020 membership and/or by donating to OAFCCD. Memberships are for each Calendar year and you can pay for your 2020 membership now. You can send a cheque with your membership fee using the attached Membership Renewal Form or you can make an immediate donation on-line through CanadaHelps. Donations of \$25 or more will be recognized with a free membership for 2020.

Giving is easy – Donate now!



Annual General Meeting November 18, 2020

The invitation to the 2020 OAFCCD Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday November 18, 2020 at 7:30pm is attached to this Newsletter.