



FALL 2007

HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# COMMUNICATION MATTERS

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS, EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS AND CAREGIVERS OF PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN.

## OAFCCD Parents as Partners

Helping parents of young children with communication disorders to develop effective partnerships with schools.

In November 2006, the board of the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders was very excited to announce that the Ontario Trillium Foundation has given the association an 18-month grant of \$121,300 to expand the OAFCCD Parents as Partners program to 11 communities across the province.

The program is targeted at families of children who have communication disorders and associated disabilities who will be starting Kindergarten in September or are already enrolled in Kindergarten programs. The program and activities are designed to:

- Help families plan the transition to school.
- Provide parents with information on school services.
- Help parents develop the skills they need to be effective partners with school staff.

The Parents as Partners project has designed six parent workshops to help parents of young children who have special needs with the transition from Preschool Programs to Special Education Programs and School Services.

In November 2007, the first workshop, "Preparing for Kindergarten," will be offered in three locations in Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant.



For more information on the project, please contact:  
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### Workshops are:

- ★ Preparing for Kindergarten.
- ★ Communicating for Success.
- ★ How the Kindergarten Program Supports Students with Special Needs.
- ★ Introduction to Special Education.
- ★ Part One: The Individual Education Plan: Introduction to IEPs and Parent Role.
- ★ Part Two: The Individual Education Plan: Developing Effective IEPs for Student Success.

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## Grand Erie OAFCCD

The Ontario Association for Families  
of Children with Communication Disorders

### “Speaking Out For Children”



#### OAFCCD's vision is that...

All children will have access to a continuum of speech and language services to support their successful participation at home, in school and in the community.

#### OAFCCD's goals are to...

- Increase public awareness regarding the need and benefit of services.
- Provide families with information and support.
- Support families to advocate for the speech and language services that their child needs.
- Work with community partners to enhance speech and language services.
- Advocate with government and provincial organizations for adequate public funding of speech and language services.
- Maintain an effective volunteer structure and viable organization.

The OAFCCD was established in 1994 by parents and professionals to help increase public awareness about the impact of a communication disorder on children and their family. There are 30 chapters across the province. Grand Erie OAFCCD covers all

of Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant.

Our chapter meets every other month and is a great place to gain support and access information. We also work hard to fundraise and organize events to increase public awareness.

In the past, we have raised money to purchase six Hanen manuals for the program, “It Takes Two To Talk,” to lend out to families. We are working on securing funding through the “Harmonize for Speech Fund” to purchase more Hanen manuals for the “More than Words” program for lending, as well as “Signing Through the Day” manuals with DVDs and “Parents as Partners” binders so that they can be offered to parents at no cost.

We also are working on expanding our lending library so parents can have access to as much information as possible. We have held barbecues, open houses and a Family Fun Fair and Dance in both Haldimand and Norfolk. We also sold pizza at the Friday the 13th event in Port Dover, all made possible due to generous local business support.

Come join us. The “O” will provide you with the support you need during the ups and downs of your child’s journey toward better communication and connect you with other families who share your concerns.

*For more information contact Becky Pow, Chapter Contact and Parent/Program Assistant at 519-426-6170 / 905-318-6623 Ext. 3451  
Email: [becky.pow@hnhu.org](mailto:becky.pow@hnhu.org)*

## Health Unit and libraries offer books to improve children’s language skills

The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit is teaming up with public libraries in Haldimand and Norfolk counties to encourage the development of language and literacy in young children.

The Health Unit’s Preschool Speech & Language Team has created a list of books that parents can share with their children at home to encourage speech and language skills. The books reinforce 32 speech sounds or language areas the team often targets with its preschool-aged clients. These include the sounds p, b, m, n, t, d, h, w, f, v, sh, z, s, s-blends, k,

g, r-blends, l-blends.

The books can also improve skills involved with phonological awareness, e.g., rhyming, alphabet knowledge and first-sound identification.

“We’re thrilled that both the Norfolk County and Haldimand County public libraries are making these books available,” stated Health Unit Speech-Language Assistant Shauna Barrow. “The libraries have agreed to purchase the books on the list if they are not already available for circulation through their lending systems.”

Barrow said the service “is a great resource for our families and both counties are to be commended for taking this step towards improved literacy and language skills for our children.”

In addition, the Health Unit has designed a bookmark with some helpful hints on how to develop a child’s oral language skills and a positive attitude towards books. The bookmark is also available at the libraries.

*For more information contact Shauna Barrow, Speech-Language Assistant, at 519-426-6170, Ext. 3258 or 905-318-6623.*

# Introducing Your Local Literacy Team

Recently, the Haldimand-Norfolk Preschool Speech and Language Program (PSLP) and the Ontario Early Years Center (OEYC) teamed up to address the language and literacy skills of preschoolers in Haldimand and Norfolk counties.

Last fall, the PSLP received additional funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to address literacy locally. The plan is to offer increased training for parents and early learning providers in the area of language and literacy. In addition, the PSLP staff is incorporating literacy intervention as a service to clients.

The OEYC, on the other hand, employs Early Literacy Specialist Marg Calder.

"I came to this job three years ago, after retiring from teaching," Marg explained. "Very early in my new career, I recognized that I share a mandate with the PSLP. We are both pursuing increased literacy rates for children. We want to ensure that every preschooler reaches kindergarten with literacy readiness!"

For the past year, the two programs have collaborated, meeting and sharing resources. Becky Pow, Parent/Program Assistant with the PSLP, has assisted Marg in many projects, including the literacy suitcases. These are available to early learning providers, and contain books, costumes, props and many ideas centered around a theme. At present, there are 37 titles in Norfolk and 14 in Haldimand. They also worked together to prepare materials for joint presentations to the Mennonite Moms and Tots group in Frogmore. The team will continue to deliver workshops jointly and make handouts on the subject of language and literacy available to interested people and agencies.

The team is very excited about a large project planned for March 2008:

"We are planning a literacy forum, and calling it, "Sowing the

Seeds, Harvesting Readers," explained Senior Speech-Language Pathologist Lori Holstein. "We hope to lure more partners to the table, to celebrate our achievements and to make a plan to fill any gaps in our literacy plan for Haldimand and Norfolk."

The team is looking for any interested join them in planning the event.

"We want the event include everyone with vested interest in the literacy Haldimand and Norfolk," noted.

*If interested, contact Marg at OEYC at 1-866-463-2759 Ext. 230 or Lori at the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3244.*



## Teacher Talk® Update!

Teacher Talk® is alive and well in Haldimand and Norfolk counties! The first series of sessions was completed last spring in Caledonia. The second series will end this month in Simcoe. This opportunity for professional development for early learning providers will be ongoing, as we hope to recruit many more of you for the next two rounds in 2008.

Teacher Talk® is based on Learning Language and Loving It, the Hanen® Program for Early Childhood Educators/Teachers. This series of three training sessions over a total of 20 hours covers the following topics:

- **Encouraging Language Development in Early Childhood Settings:** Research shows that children engaged

in positive interactions with adults will most likely talk, learn and do. Children are less likely to talk or learn if engaged with an adult who directs the play, bombards with questions and instructions, or who tries to coax them to talk.

- **Let Language Lead the Way to Literacy:** Preparing children for literacy means providing them with an environment where reading and writing are a natural and meaningful part of every day.
- **Fostering Peer Interaction in Early Childhood Settings:** Research has shown that children in centres interact more with the teachers than their peers. But opportunities

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to interact with peers is crucial for social skill development! Participants learn that successful interaction depends on the child's social skills, language skills and conversational style. Some children need more support to interact appropriately.

Using their workbooks (three in total, matching each training session), the participants were able to come up with very practical, specific ideas and changes they could make in their centers.

**Congratulations to staff of the following centres...**

- McKinnon Park Child Care Centre, Caledonia: *MaryAnne Whitford, Sheri McCuen, Patti Smith, Michelle Gualtieri, Joanne Woods, Barb McCulloch, Lana General.*
- Buttons and Bows Cooperative Preschool, Hagersville: *Wanda Kinnear.*
- Happiness Is Cooperative Preschool, Cayuga: *Ashley Topps.*
- YWCA Child Care Centre, Cayuga: *Lisa Chapman.*
- Ready, Set, School, Dunnville: *Angela Crooks, Ashley Topps, Lisa Chapman* (yes, Ashley and Lisa each represented two centres!).
- Centre Educatif Les Petits Chercheurs, Simcoe: *Claire Larose and Helen Hobbins.*
- Koala T. Care Daycare, Hagersville: *Cherie Donato and Deanna Donato.*
- Thompson Creek Elementary School, Dunnville: *Sandra Merritt.*
- Parkway Daycare, Townsend: *Michelle Zimmer and Sarah Ormerod.*
- NYCA (Norfolk Youth and Child Association), Simcoe: *Patty Crockett-Banks.*

These early learning providers have acquired practical strategies to promote the language, literacy and social skills of all the children in their settings. They have received credit towards *Raising the Bar* at their centers.

For information on how you can access the next *Teacher Talk*®, contact: *Lori Holstein, Speech-Language Pathologist, 519-426-6170 Ext. 3244. Rita Taylor, Speech-Language Pathologist, 905-318-5367 Ext. 319.*



**Some of the comments received...**

- *I have learned how to encourage more interaction with hard-to-reach children. I realize it's important to WAIT longer for the child's response.*
- *I think I ask too many questions, especially when a child has a shy style. I will try to make more comments. Thanks Lori!*
- *I will use routines, songs and games, and wait for the children to take a turn.*
- *I wanted to find out how to make print work in the classroom, and I did! I have more ideas on where to put and use print.*
- *I can now focus on turning books into a time for interaction and conversation, NOT reading! I can focus on each child's interest in the book and respond to each.*
- *I really enjoyed sharing the information about writing from all the different centres!*

*Communication Matters is published biannually by the Haldimand-Norfolk Preschool Speech and Language program. It has been developed to increase awareness for services available and tips on the prevention of speech, language or hearing disorders in the preschool population. This newsletter is intended for parents, teachers and caregivers of preschool-aged children. You are invited to contact the Health Unit with your articles and ideas.*

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