



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# COMMUNICATION MATTERS

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

## Junior Kindergarten?



It's that time! The time some parents dread: their three or four year old is registered for junior kindergarten next fall. The worries are many: will their child be comfortable with all the new experiences, such as the bus ride, and recess? Will he be able to separate, or will he have to be extracted from the parent, crying? Does he have the readiness skills, such as knowing the letters in his name?

If the child also has speech or language difficulties, the worries are even greater. The potential for negative experiences because of communication problems is great: there could be misunderstandings, conflicts with peers, behavior problems and an impact on the child's sense of well-being. No parent wants this for their child!

Fortunately, the provincial government provides families with preschool speech and language (PSL) services to ensure these impacts are lessened, or prevented! There is no cost to parents, and the services can be easily accessed by calling the Parent Info Line at 1 866 HN EARLY (463-2759).

However, there is now a lengthy wait for assessment. The earlier a referral is made, the better! If a child is referred at the time of kindergarten registration or orientation, there are still many programs he could benefit from! If the referral is

made at the start of junior kindergarten, there will be fewer options available. And if the referral comes too late (January of the JK year), then the PSL cannot be accessed; the child will have to wait to be referred to school-based services when senior kindergarten starts.

So, don't wait!

If you are having trouble deciding whether a child could benefit from an assessment by a certified speech-language pathologist (SLP), check out these milestones:

### By 3 years old, a child should:

- Understand "who", "what", "where" and "why" questions
- Create long sentences, using five to eight words
- Talk about past events (such as their trip to grandparents' house, or their day at daycare)
- Tell simple stories

- Show affection for his/her favorite playmates
- Engage in multi-step pretend play (such as cooking a meal, fixing the car)
- Have a beginning interest in rhyming
- Be understood by most people outside of the family most of the time (75%)
- Be aware of the function of print (know the words in the menu mean food, the words on the shopping list, signs on the road)

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Mommy,  
wheo dis  
boon go?

frustrates children. The frustration of being corrected interferes with actually learning the better way! Try to avoid directly correcting a child.

PRAISE if the child attempts is also very effective. For example, if you hear the child try: *Ya, wheo DOES dis boon go?*, give specific praise (*Oh, I like how you ask 'where DOES this spoon go!'.*)

More examples of usual errors follows:

*A doggie don't eat cawwots! (A doggie DOESN'T eat carrots!)*

Errors for "r", "l" and "th" are usual. Some children have difficulty with these sounds until to grade two. By age 3 ½ years, "s"-blends begin emerging. That means they use some, but not all. For example, your child can say 'swim' but still says *boon* for *spoon*. Errors marking the negative are also usual, since we have so many of them in English (*not, don't, can't, isn't, doesn't, etc.*).

*My bonne bob tiko falled! (My sponge bob sticker FELL!)*

*It's on my sue! (It's on my shoe!)*

Some children also have difficulty with "sh", "ch" and "j", but make substitutions that are very close (*suze* for *shoes*; *dzump* for *jump*). Irregular past tense forms (like *ran, went*) are another complex grammatical form that may take until the end of senior kindergarten to figure out. When do you add '-ed' (*pulled*), and when don't you (*runned*)?

Irregular plural forms are also difficult: when do you add 's' (*cats, dogs*) and when don't you (*mice, sheep*)? Adult models are critical, so that kids can figure it out.

*If weeves come in my house, I use a bacuum (If leaves come in my house, I use a vacuum!)*

Finally, the "v" sound may be replaced at the beginnings of words, but is starting to emerge in other positions (such as in the middle of the word 'leaves').

These are some reasons why a less familiar person might have difficulty understanding what a three-year old has to say. But hopefully, they understand about 75%.

### By 4 years old, a child should:

- Follow directions involving three or more steps (such as first, get some paper, then draw a picture, last give it to mom)
- Use adult-type grammar
- Tell stories with a clear beginning, middle and end
- Talk to try to solve problems with adults and other children
- Demonstrate increasingly complex imaginative play
- Match some letters with their sounds (such as Letter T makes 'tuh')
- Be understood by less familiar people almost all the time (95%)

Many children age 3 years are making grammatical errors and speech sound errors that are considered USUAL for their age. Some examples include:

*Mommy, wheo dis boon go? (Where DOES this spoon go?)*

Deletions of "s" from blends (like in *spoon*) are usual between ages 3 and 3 ½. Difficulties with question-formation are also quite common. Our English grammar is quite complex, and requires that word-order is reversed when a child asks a question. Children need adult models to figure it out.

INDIRECT CORRECTION is the best way to help a child learn these tricky sounds and grammatical forms. That means, repeat what she says, and simply emphasize the better way (*Hm, where DOES this sssspoon go?*). Direct correction (*No, don't say 'boon', say 'ssspoon'*)

A doggie  
don't eat  
cawwots!



- Be able to generate rhymes (such as *hook, book, hey, that rhymes!*)

Many of the errors highlighted in the above examples will continue to persist with a few exceptions: by age 4 years, children should be using “s”-blends. Their expressive language becomes more adult-sounding, with very few grammatical errors. They are using negative forms, plurals, “-ing” endings (*playing, sleeping*), and most of the “little words” (*is, are, a, the*). They are able to form most questions properly. Most of their grammatical errors are due to irregular forms (*ran, mice*).

### What about “lisps”?

There are two types of lisps: interdental and lateral. The most common is INTERDENTAL, which happens when a child uses tongue-between-the-teeth posturing. This may result in a distortion of “s”, “z”, “sh”, “ch” and “j” sounds (they sound more like “th”).

LATERAL posturing means the sides of the tongue are depressed during production of “s” and “z” (and others). The resulting distortion can be described as



‘slushy’ sounding.

For some children, the distortion causes misunderstandings, while many children still have perceptually accurate sounds in spite of the posturing. The key element to consider is whether the posture interferes with how much of the child’s speech can be understood. If the 3 year old is still understood 75% (by less familiar peo-

ple), and the 4 year old is nearly always understood, then the lisp is not impacting articulation.

### In Summary

**Don’t worry** about “l”, “r”, “th” or errors with irregular past tense or plural. **Do worry** if less familiar people have trouble understanding your 3 or 4 year old.



## Haldimand-Norfolk Best Start Network

The Haldimand and Norfolk Best Start Network is again hosting, in partnership with the Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board and the Grand Erie District School Board, Best Start Parent Fairs for parents and caregivers of kindergarten students entering school for the first time. We wish to bring our communities together for the benefit of all children in Haldimand and Norfolk to get the best start they can for success.

The Best Start Parent Fair is an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn about resources and services available in the community as their children start school. A bus safety video and short bus ride are part of this event as well.

The Best Start Parent Fairs will take place on the following dates at the schools listed below:

### Haldimand County

Saturday, April 30, 2011 - Cayuga  
Cayuga Secondary School  
70 Highway 54  
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Wednesday, May 18th, 2011 - Dunnville  
Thompson Creek Public School  
800 Cross St. W.  
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Norfolk County

Saturday, May 14, 2011 - Simcoe  
Holy Trinity School Cafetorium  
128 Evergreen Hill Rd.  
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.



## COMING EVENTS

### May is Speech & Hearing Month

Come and "Meet the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)" at the Ontario Early Years Center (OEYC) – Haldimand and Norfolk (A unit of H-N REACH).

You will meet the SLP and receive information on communication skills, a checklist for kids from birth to age four, learn strategies to help your child's language and speech and access referrals for assessment.

Caledonia, 172 Argyle St. North  
May 11 10 to 11 a.m.

Cayuga, JL Mitchener School  
May 26 10 to 11 a.m.

Delhi, Delhi United Church,  
105 Church St. West  
May 19 10 to 11 a.m.

Dunville, Dunville Central School  
May 17 10 to 11 a.m.

Hagersville, St. Mary's School  
May 24 10 to 11 a.m.

Houghton, Houghton Public School  
May 11 10 to 11 a.m.

Port Rowan, Port Rowan Public School  
May 26 10 to 11 a.m.

Simcoe, 12 Colborne St. North  
May 9 10 to 11 a.m.

Waterford, Waterford United church  
May 17 10 to 11 a.m.

## OAFCCD Parents as Partners

*Helping parents of young children with special needs to develop effective partnerships with schools*



The Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders supports parents by offering the Parents as Partners series of workshops, and by advocating for improved service locally. The following events are coming soon to a location near you!

### WORKSHOP 3

#### How the Kindergarten Program Supports Students with Special Needs

Wednesday April 27 • 6 to 8:30 p.m.  
Simcoe Health Unit, 12 Gilbertson Drive

### WORKSHOP 4

#### Introduction to Special Education: The Parent Role in the IEP and IPRC Process

Wednesday May 25 • 6 - 8:30 p.m.      Thursday April 28 • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Simcoe Health Unit, 12 Gilbertson Drive      OEYC Caledonia, 172 Argyle St N

To register for Workshops:  
Ontario Early Years Centre • 519-429-2875 or 1-866-463-2759

*A partnership of: Haldimand and Norfolk Preschool Speech and Language Program, Lansdowne Children's Centre, Haldimand-Norfolk REACH, Brant Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board, Grand Erie District School Board*



## Town Hall Meeting

Town Hall style meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 11th, 2011 @ 7:00 p.m. at Jarvis Public School. (see insert for more details)

For more information, contact

- Alison Morse, Provincial Coordinator of OAFCCD at 519 842-9506 or abmorse@kwic.com
- Andrea Riddoch, Grand Erie OAFCCD member at 519 443-4715 or andrea\_riddoch@hotmail.com

*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.*



#### Simcoe

P.O. Box 247, 12 Gilbertson Drive  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1  
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623

#### Langton

22 Albert Street  
Langton, ON N0E 1G0  
519.875.4485



#### Caledonia

282 Argyle Street South  
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7  
905.318.5367

#### Dunville

117 Forest Street E.  
Dunville, ON N1A 1B9  
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