



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

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

Welcome to the Haldimand-Norfolk PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

We want to provide you and your child with excellent service. In order to do so, we'd like to help you get to know more about us.

Our Philosophy

We believe that:

- No child is too young to benefit from having a responsive communication partner.
- You are your child's most important communication partner.
- You are your child's best teacher.
- You have the most opportunities to help your child learn about communication.
- We can help you make the most of those opportunities.
- We need your full involvement in order to build your child's communication skills.

Our Staff

Our staff is made up of Registered Speech-Language Pathologists, a Communicative Disorders Assistant, a Speech-Language Assistant, a Parent Program Assistant, and a Speech Program Secretary.

Our **Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)** have university-level training in the prevention, identification, assessment, treatment and (re)habilitation of communication and/or swallowing disorders in children and adults. In order to practice in Ontario, SLPs must be registered with the College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists of Ontario (CASLPO). This College governs the practice of Speech-Language Pathology, holds its members up to specific practice standards, and pro-

vides information and support for both SLPs and the general public. Copies of "You Deserve Respectful, Effective High Quality Service," an information brochure about CASLPO, are available to you free of charge in any of our offices.

Our **Communicative Disorders Assistant (CDA)** works with the SLPs to provide individual and group therapy sessions. The SLP outlines goals based on her assessment of your child, and the CDA plans and carries out activities designed to attain those goals. The SLP is responsible for monitoring your child's progress. CDAs have community college training to work in the areas of speech, language, augmentative communication and hearing with individuals of any age.

Our **Speech-Language Assistant (SLA)** and **Parent Program Assistant (PPA)** support the program in many ways, from direct client involvement to material preparation, promotion and early identification activities. They are also responsible for providing second stage Infant Hearing screening. That means that if your newborn has a "refer" response when hearing testing is conducted at birth, our SLA or PPA will provide a second test once your baby is home from the hospital.

Our **Speech Program Secretary** provides invaluable clerical and reception support. She may be the first voice you hear from our program, as she does much of the scheduling for the Norfolk and Langton offices.



★ Our Services

The program is administered by the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit with sites in Dunnville, Caledonia, Simcoe and Langton. We also visit homes and other sites across the two counties, including child care programs, home daycares and the EarlyON Centres.

The service recommended for your child will be based on the SLP's assessment. Our SLPs use a variety of tests that are standardized and norm-referenced. This means that the tests have been administered according to specific directions with large groups of children. The results help us determine whether your child's skills are in line with those of other children his or her age, and what areas we may need to help with.

Standardized testing is not our only, or even our most important way of gaining information. We interact with your child, and watch as you do too. You are our most valuable source of information; you can tell us whether your child's communication during our visit is typical, and describe ways in which he or she communicates at home. It's essential that you be present and fully involved during assessment, and that you understand the SLP's observations and recommendations.

Within two weeks of your child's assessment, the SLP will provide you with a copy of her Initial Assessment Report. This will outline her impressions, any test results, general suggestions, and specific recommendations for intervention. The interventions we offer include:



★ Parent Training

The provision of parent education with a specific curriculum, supported by the use of videotaping as a learning tool. Our SLPs are certified to run parent training programs designed by the Hanen Centre, a Canadian centre of excellence in child language that is recognized throughout the world.

★ Home Programming

The provision of a specific, individualized program designed by the SLP and demonstrated by the SLP or CDA so you can carry it out at home.

★ Caregiver Consultation

The provision of specific, goal-directed activities carried out by early education professionals or other caregivers, supported by the SLP.

★ Direct Intervention, Individual or in Groups

The provision of focused specific intervention in small groups or private sessions. Either kind of direct intervention may be provided by an SLP, CDA or SLA. Our PPA runs many of our group interventions. Except in very rare circumstances, your presence in the session is essential in direct intervention as in other forms of service.

★ Monitoring and Parent Consultation

The provision of regular contact while your family accesses other services that may take priority (e.g. consultation with an Ear Nose and Throat doctor).

As with assessment, your presence and involvement in intervention is critical.

If your child is working with our CDA or SLA, you'll receive a copy of the Management Plan that outlines your child's goals. The SLP retains the clinical responsibility for your child's service, no matter who the direct service provider is.

Our Commitment to Confidentiality

Your privacy matters. Our team members will not discuss your child with anyone else without your knowledge and consent. We will not send reports to anyone besides you unless you give us your permission. Anything you say to us is confidential. The only exception to this rule is that, by law, we must report information that gives "reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection" (Child and Family Services Act, section 72).



Our Commitment to Quality

If at any time you have questions or concerns about our service, we ask you to speak first to your child's SLP. If you need a higher authority, you can contact our **Program Manager, Marcia VandenBussche**, at 519-426-6170 x 3370. As SLPs are registered professionals, you also have access to CASLPO to discuss concerns or initiate a formal complaint. This process is outlined on the CASLPO website (www.caslpo.com). CASLPO can be reached by phone at 1-800-993-9459.

You can ensure quality service for your child in other ways too. Children with communication difficulties rely on parents to advocate on their behalf. We encourage parents to become involved with the Grand Erie Chapter of the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD).



You also have the opportunity to influence our program's direction through involvement with our System Committee. This committee meets three times a year, in October, February and June. Its mandate is to ensure the development and ongoing effectiveness of the Preschool Speech and Language system. The membership includes representatives from a variety of local agencies, including the OAFCCD. Parents have an equal and important voice on the committee. To volunteer, contact our **Manager, Marcia VandenBussche** or our **Senior SLP, Lori Holstein** at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3244.

We're looking forward to our involvement with you and your child!





OAFCCD Parents as Partners

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



This project is targeted at families of children who have communication disorders and associated disabilities that will be starting Kindergarten in September or are already enrolled in Kindergarten programs.

The program provides workshops where parents can:

- learn the “jargon” of the special education system.
- understand their role and responsibilities within the system.
- develop and practice problem solving and negotiation skills.
- learn to navigate the service system.
- find out how to be effective partners with school staff.
- and help make sure that children get the supports and services they need to be successful at school.

The Parents as Partners project has designed a full day workshop to help parents of young children with special needs with the transition from Preschool Programs to Special Education Programs and School Services.

For more information on workshops, please contact:

Becky Pow, Chapter contact

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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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