

# Language Links

Toronto Preschool Speech and Languages Services & The Infant Hearing Program **Newsletter**

Winter 2003

## Profile of TPSLS Partner Agencies

TPSLS could not provide a successful service without our community partners. In each edition of Language Links, a partner agency will be highlighted. This issue highlights:

### City of Toronto, Children's Services Division

Children's Services is designated as the City's "child care service system manager" under provincial legislation and as such has the responsibility for planning and managing a broad range of child care services. Their responsibilities include:

- fee and wage subsidies
- family resource programs
- special needs resource funding
- summer day camps
- operating 59 child care programs
- supporting the City's broader children's strategy by managing the initiatives and events of the



Children's Advocate and the Children and Youth Action Committee (e.g., Report Card on Children and Youth, Children's Summit, Advocates Award, First Duty Project, etc.)

Many children with speech/language needs and hearing loss attend these child care programs. TPSLS staff work closely with the staff from the Children's Services Division to effectively meet the needs of these children and their families.

## Annual General Meeting

Toronto Preschool Speech and Language Services (TPSLS) held its first Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, October 2, 2002 at the St. Lawrence Hall in downtown Toronto.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review the TPSLS Annual Service Report as well as a chance to thank all the wonderful community partners who make TPSLS work!

Those who attended had the chance to hear two presentations about the literacy development of preschool children:

1. Celia Lottridge - Mother Goose Programs
2. Anita Small and Joanne Cripps - Literacy Development for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

## How to Contribute to our Language Links Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article or suggest a topic for inclusion in upcoming editions, please contact us at: [info@tpsls.on.ca](mailto:info@tpsls.on.ca), or call us at 416-338-8255 or 416-338-0025 (TTY). Our web site address is [www.tpsls.on.ca](http://www.tpsls.on.ca).

## On the Lighter Side of Language Links

A mother mouse and her mouslettes were munching their lunch of cheese in the corner of a room. A cat comes into the room spies the mouse family and starts to come towards them with a hungry look on his face. The mother mouse, in her loudest voice shouts "Bark Bark" and the cat runs away. The mother mouse turns to her children and says "See how important it is to know a second language!"



## **PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES**

### **Oral Motor Parent Child Play Group Program**

An exciting new program has been developed for children aged 2 1/2–3 1/2 with oral-motor difficulties. Staff from the Toronto Children's Centre in collaboration with our Quadrant staff developed this program. The program was designed for children who have good language comprehension and communication skills but use few words or are hard to understand because they have difficulty making or combining speech sounds.

Children and parents attend weekly sessions that include play, snack and music time. Parents are shown ways to encourage clearer speech and are given activities to practice at home.

Parents responded positively to the program and changes were observed in the children's speech. We hope to expand this program in the future. In November 2002, the staff who developed this program delivered a training workshop for 20 TPSLS staff. A program manual has been developed and hopefully can be used as a guide for the development of this unique service throughout the province.

### **Feedback from a Parent Who Attended this Program with her child in the South Quadrant:**

"I want to express how grateful we are for our son's opportunity to participate in the recent Oral Motor Parent Child Play Program."

"This program was responsible for some real breakthroughs in our son's speech. The format of the program, with the variety of play stations and the change from unstructured play to group activity worked very well. The play stations were great fun with their themes, which were set up to elicit certain sounds/words from the children. Our son enjoyed all the activities, including songs, play with bubbles, musical instruments and snack times. All of the children seemed to eagerly await their favourite activities."

"The instructors, Maureen Benadiba Cohen, Rozanne Israel and Dana Prutschi were consummate professionals and a real compliment to each other. They made each class so much fun that the children's joy was evident at each class! The instructors always maintained a high level of control and if an activity was not working for a particular child they would quickly come up with ideas to adjust the play or change it all together. We are still using the various techniques we learned in the program. I strongly believe that this format is most beneficial as a child and parent's introduction to speech and language services. It sets the child up with a fun, positive experience which seems less intensely focused on the individual child and has the feel of a play group instead. For the parent, it provides the training to truly help your child with techniques and approaches to continue the lessons at home! Keep up the great work!"

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## **INFANT HEARING PROGRAM (IHP)**

### **Family Support Worker**

People can have many different reactions and feelings when their infant is identified with a hearing loss. Therefore, the IHP provides follow up family support and services for parents and families of infants identified with a hearing loss.

The Family Support Worker (FSW) has been trained by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to provide these follow up services. In Toronto, our FSW is Judy Chin and she has a background in Social Work and Education. Parents will receive counselling and support from Judy as they adjust to the knowledge that their child is deaf or hard of hearing. All families also receive a Parent Resource Binder.

Judy will provide the families with unbiased information on all the methods of communication available to their child through the IHP. She will then support the family through the decision-making process as they choose a communication option that is best suited to their child and family's needs. Judy will have ongoing contact with the family while their child is receiving communication services through IHP.

### **IHP Operations Committee**

The Implementation Committee of IHP completed its work on December 4, 2002. The Committee provided invaluable input and advice to the Lead Agency and Governance Board in getting the program up and running. The Committee also thanked Jackie Whittingham from the District Health Council for chairing the committee over the past 18 months.

A new Operations Committee will now be formed to provide ongoing input and advice to the program. The Operations Committee will be made up of representatives from IHP working groups and various community stakeholders. Regular meetings begin February 2003.

