

Language Links

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

September 2003

MISSION OF TPSLS: To provide exemplary identification and intervention services responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity, in partnership with community agencies, to enable all preschool children in Toronto to reach their highest communication potential.

HOW TO GET SERVICES FROM TPSLS

If you have a concern about your child's speech and language development (up to age 5 or entry into SK) or your infant's hearing (up to age 2 years), call the central TPSLS phone number at 416- 338-8255 (Voice) or 416-338-0025 (TTY). Parents, caregivers and health professionals can make referrals.

For speech and language concerns, we'll take some information and your child will be placed on a waiting list for service. We will contact you at a later date to set up an appointment for an assessment.

For hearing concerns, babies 0-6 months who missed the hospital screening can be screened in a community clinic. Children 6-24 months can be screened **only** if there is a concern about the baby's ability to hear.

Child Care Consultation in Preschool Speech and Language Services

TPSLS has just recently developed a Child Care Consultation Policy in conjunction with the Children's Services Department of Toronto and other community service providers. This policy provides a framework for staff to use when working with children attending child care programs. The Policy has just recently been sent out to all child care programs in the City of Toronto.

Generally the policy states that it is preferable for a parent to bring their child to one of our community clinics for an assessment and/or intervention. However, if this is not possible, an appointment can be arranged for the child to be assessed at his/her child care centre.

Following the assessment, a meeting will be arranged to develop a service plan, with the Speech Language Pathologist, parent, supervisor and the teacher.

If a child has a language disorder, and the family is not able to transport the child to speech language clinic locations for group language interventions, consultation to the child care staff will be the recommended intervention.

However, if the child has a speech disorder (e.g. child is unintelligible due to disordered articulation) caregiver consultation is not an effective intervention and direct therapy is often necessary. If this is required and the parent cannot bring the child to a clinic for service, TPSLS will try to arrange some service on a case by case basis. A program staff member must participate in the therapy session and implement the goals into the child's daily program.

The Lighter Side of Language Links: Play Dough Recipe

Here is a great recipe for Play Dough that you can make with your child. This is a wonderful activity for enhancing your child's language. Take turns following the steps of the recipe and talk about what you and he/she are doing as it is happening.

Include the pictures so that your child can follow the recipe on his/her own. Remember to keep your language simple if your child is expressing him/herself using single words or short sentences.

Perk up the play dough and the conversation by adding flavoured drink crystals, sparkles or coffee grinds and talk about the smell, colour and texture of your creation.

You and your child can use your play dough for all kinds of pretend play, from making animals and "monsters", to having birthday parties.

Making Playdough

First, add 2 cups of boiling water.



Then, add 1/4 cup of salt.



Next, add food colouring, vanilla and spices or undiluted flavoured drink crystals.



Then, add 2 tablespoons of oil.



Next, add 4 cups of flour.



Then, add 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar.



Next, mix.



Finally, knead dough.



ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us at our Annual Meeting to be held on Wednesday, October 8th, 2003 at 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the North York Memorial Hall, 5110 Yonge Street, Lower Floor, Gold Room. To register, please contact us at 416-338-8255 or 416-338-0025 (TTY).

PROFILE OF ONE OF OUR PARTNER AGENCIES

In each edition of our newsletter we will print a short article which highlights the services of one of our partner agencies in the community. In this edition, we are pleased to tell everyone about Voice for Hearing Impaired Children. If you are a TPSLS partner agency and would be interested in submitting an agency profile, please e-mail it to the editor of Language Links, scohen@toronto.ca

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

by Nora-Lynn McIntyre

VOICE is a parent support group that laid its roots in Toronto more than 35 years ago when parents of hearing impaired children envisioned a common goal. They wanted their children to learn to listen and speak and to be educated alongside their hearing peers.

Today VOICE is a model parent support organization with chapters in existence across Ontario and beyond. Through regular meetings, workshops and camps, VOICE provides emotional and technical assistance to families of hearing impaired children. VOICE works to increase public awareness of hearing impairment and inform the public that deaf children can learn to listen and speak.

VOICE recognizes the value of the provincial Infant Hearing Program in its mandate to identify hearing loss at birth and to provide effective audiological management, unbiased information, support to families in decision making and communication options. Early identification of hearing loss with appropriate interventions is key to assuring the development of communication.

VOICE knows that the first few months after a child has been diagnosed as having a hearing impairment can be confusing and frightening for parents. Parents may be bombarded with conflicting information and must make lifelong decisions affecting their child's education and future.

VOICE provides parent support, connecting families and enabling regular parent sharing opportunities as well as information meetings and accessible auditory-verbal therapy.

Hearing impairment affects one in ten Canadians at some point in their lives. Many individuals assume that if you are deaf, you are also dumb; if you wear a hearing aid, you can hear perfectly; if you are deaf, you are not very bright; if you speak, you cannot be deaf. All these assumptions are not true.

Hearing impaired children face these types of assumptions daily; the greatest challenge for them is ignorance on the part of the general public. VOICE advocates for the supports and services in our health and education sectors that will enable children who are deaf and hard of hearing to fully integrate into a hearing world with the goal of becoming participating members of a hearing society.

In the absence of provincially funded programs, VOICE developed a province-wide auditory-verbal therapy program for its member families, supported through the fundraising efforts of this not-for-profit organization. VOICE is pleased that some of the pressure to fundraise for this essential intervention has been lifted through the introduction of the Infant Hearing Program. We will continue to advocate for equitable transitional supports in school boards across Ontario for the preschool and school aged students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Knowledgeable professionals and appropriate interventions can help to ensure that children who are deaf will have a VOICE for life.

For additional information about the supports and services VOICE offers and to find out more about VOICE, please visit our web site at www.voicefordeafkids.com or call VOICE at 416-487-7719.



The Jack Weber Memorial Award

Each year Toronto Preschool Speech and Language Services is pleased to support the nomination process for this award which is given to a member of the community, other than a Speech Language Pathologist, who has demonstrated commitment, creativity and skill in supporting the development of speech and language skills in young children. Jack Weber was the former head of the Speech and

Language Department at Adventure Place, a Child and Family Centre in North York. Jack worked tirelessly to help young children with speech and language difficulties reach their highest possible potential. If you would like to submit a nomination,

please contact Valerie Usher at Adventure Place at 416-744-7650.

Well Baby Infant Hearing Screening

David Highgate, Infant Hearing Screening Coordinator William Osler Health Centre, Etobicoke Site

Hearing screening is safe, quick and easy to do! An infant hearing screener performs two types of hearing screening tests, a DPOAE (Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions) test and an AABR (Automated Auditory Brain Stem Response) test. The DPOAE test is portable as well as quick and easy to use, and therefore is performed at the bedside.

In my experience, most parents are happy to proceed with the screening; those who aren't just need further explanation as to why their baby should have their hearing screened and how the hearing equipment works.

If a baby receives a refer result on their DPOAE test, the screener will then complete an AABR screen. This screening is generally completed in a quiet room. Most parents display a little anxiety when told that a second test will be provided for their baby. They generally relax when they understand that many babies receive a refer result on the first level screening because of congestion or embryonic fluid in their ears.

If a baby then receives a refer result on the AABR screen they are referred to the Infant Hearing Program for further screening in the community. This is scheduled when the baby is two or three weeks old, to insure the hearing screening results are not heavily influenced by fluid in their ears or congestion.