

# Surrey Early Speech and Language Program Newsletter

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Fall 2009

## Routines and Transitions – How they can Help

By: Alex Lay

Fall marks the beginning of a new school year, and it's a time when most of us are getting back to routines and regularly scheduled activities. As much as we may miss the relaxed days of summer, routines can be very important, especially for young children and children with language delays.

### Why are routines important?

Routines help young children make sense of their world. Since they do not yet understand the concept of time, routines help organize and order events in their lives. The repetitiveness and predictability of regular routines helps children feel safer, more secure and more confident.

Routines help teach children about patterns. Learning about patterns can promote logical thinking, making associations between events, and can even help with later skills such as reading.

Routines also provide wonderful opportunities for language learning because of their structured and repetitive nature. Don't be afraid to use the same vocabulary and phrases during your daily routines.

Repetition is a powerful tool to help children learn language. You can even try incorporating songs and games into your daily routines to make them more entertaining and fun.

Routines can help parents too. Not only can they keep you organized and on schedule, they can also help ease transitions between activities and cut down on difficult behaviours. For example, having a bedtime routine can do wonders to reduce frustration and conflict.



### Helping children with routines and transitions:

- ❖ Use pictures to break down a household routine into smaller steps such as for toileting, or hand washing.
- ❖ Make pictures of daily activities such as breakfast, getting dressed, grocery shopping, lunchtime, naptime, playtime, dinner, bedtime.
- ❖ In the morning, talk to your child about what you are going to do that day and use those pictures to build a visual schedule of your day together.
- ❖ Be flexible, disruptions to your routines will happen. Model flexibility in dealing with changes along the way. Talk about changes with your child as they come up.
- ❖ You can even actively promote flexibility in your child by throwing in some fun variations to daily routines such as: serving breakfast for dinner, making a spontaneous stop at the beach for an ice cream cone, or having a backwards day by doing some things in the reverse order, like having a bath before dinnertime.

## Congratulations and Welcome



**We are happy to announce the arrival of Lilah in early July. Amanda has been back to visit a few times with Lilah and we look forward to watching her grow and change with each visit. Mom, Dad and Lilah are all doing well.**

**Enjoy your time being a mom Amanda. We look forward to having you back with the team next year.**

## Annual General Meeting 2009... Mark your calendars!

Each year we invite stakeholders to our annual meeting as a way of updating them on our work, to meet other families (free childcare provided) and to recognize our generous volunteers and donors. On Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 the BC Family Hearing Resource Society will host it's annual general meeting. We look forward to seeing you all there.

## Summer Groups – A Summary

By Alex Lay & Linda Spencer

This summer we had the pleasure of offering 3 groups for children with speech and language concerns. These included the *The Kid Connection* – Social Communication Group, *Communication Station* – Language Group and *Playing With Sounds* – Phonology Group. Each group met twice a week in July and by all reports from families, were a lot of fun for participants. Activities included social playtime, circle time, crafts and motor activities and games.

***The Kid Connection:*** This year we were lucky to have both an SLP in the classroom and a student volunteer to help out. The children had a chance to share stories and favourite toys during show and tell, learn new songs, hear some stories and play games. Social interactions were encouraged and supported. Parents also learned strategies to help foster social communication outside of the classroom. Group goals included following directions, requesting, turn taking, sharing, collaborating and team work, conflict resolution, self regulation, initiating play and conversation, asking questions and making comments.

***Communication Station:*** The children had a chance to make new friends, share interests, learn new songs, hear some stories and play games. Group goals included proper use of pronouns (he, she, they, we) responding to and asking questions, use of past tense, and including is/are in sentences, and sequencing events (first, next, before, after, last). We also had opportunity for the children to practice taking turns in conversation and following directions. Parents were given the opportunity to learn some strategies to help foster these structures in their child's utterances.

Each Thursday in July, the participants and their families from *The Kid Connection* and *Communication Station* joined together for a group fieldtrip. We visited the animals at Queen's Park petting farm and enjoyed the playground, looked inside a beehive and tasted some honey at the Honeybee Centre, went for a train ride at Bear Creek Park, and had some fun in the sun at Crescent Beach. Friendships were formed, and we all had fun.

***Playing with Sounds:*** Two mornings a week we brought together the children to introduce them to new speech sounds. This new sound was incorporated into craft activities, stories, songs, scavenger hunts and sensory activities that included a spaghetti table, shaving cream, sand, and water to name just a few. Along with the target sound of the day, each child was given a chance to practise a sound they had specific trouble with while the

parents had the opportunity to practise working with the children and learning how to help their child

with home practice. This year, we were fortunate to have a volunteer along with the SLP each day in the class to help us out.

We look forward to doing it all again next summer!



## Get Involved ....

Your support is a valued part of our program and we thank you for making it a continued success. Below are a few suggestions on ways that families can continue to strengthen and support the program.

**Join the Society**

**Join the Board**

**Donate gently used toys, books, money or time**

**Participate in our Annual Walk-a-thon**

**Fundraiser in May**

**Join a Committee – like our annual Walk-a-thon committee**

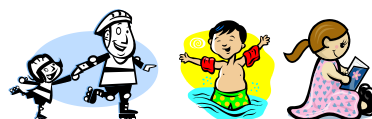
**Contribute to our Newsletter**

\*Contact the Surrey Early Speech and Language Program at 604-584-2827 or email [info@seslp.org](mailto:info@seslp.org) if you are interested in getting involved with our program or have questions about any of the above.

## What's in your community?

Parents often ask us what else they can do with their child to help language develop. Having your child involved with other children in fun environments can be very motivating and support this growth. There are many opportunities in our communities that already are set up to facilitate such development. Check out:

- ❖ Story Time at your local Library
- ❖ Parent and Tot swimming time at your local pool (Your community pool or the Y)
- ❖ Parent and Tot Skating time at your local arena
- ❖ Gym times for tots and preschoolers at your local recreation centre
- ❖ The Surrey or White Rock Family Place



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