

Surrey Early Speech and Language Program Newsletter

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Parents have the power...

By Robyn Church

SPEECH-LANGUAGE INTERVENTION FOR THE YOUNG CHILD- WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Children learn language through naturally occurring interactions with their caregivers. (Rossetti, 1996). Most children learn to talk and communicate naturally and easily. Learning to talk happens at different rates for different children. In general, children start saying their first meaningful words around one year old and start putting two words together around two years of age. However, for different reasons some children have a harder time learning and copying words. One reason might be that a child has had numerous ear infections. Or it could be that a child is having difficulty pronouncing certain consonant sounds. Some children just need more time to learn.

Children learn language by first hearing, or being exposed to, language. After hearing a word many times (i.e. 10 times or maybe 100 times or perhaps 1,000 times) eventually a child will copy the word and then use the word! A child hears language and therefore learns language most from their primary caregiver. **Speech-language intervention for the young child mainly involves teaching the caregiver.** Usually the speech-language pathologist (SLP) will teach and demonstrate one or two language facilitation strategies to a parent during an initial appointment. The SLP tries to give very practical suggestions to caregivers about how and when to implement these interactional techniques. After the caregiver has had time to practice the strategies, a follow-up appointment with the SLP can be very helpful.

"My 2 ½ child was only saying 4 words so I took him to a speech-language pathologist. I thought we would have classes every week. We only saw the SLP about once a month. At the sessions we went to the speech pathologist spent all her time teaching me, not my child! She taught me different ways to talk to my son and to respond to my son. It was really different than I thought it was going to be, but it worked!" ...conversation with a parent

There are several language facilitation strategies a parent or caregiver can learn that have been proven to help children learn to talk.

❧ STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE ❧

SHORT SIMPLE SENTENCES

Adjust your level of language so that it is one step above your child's level. If your child is not saying very many words then you use single words when talking to him/her. If your child is using single words then you use two word long phrases when talking to him/her, e.g. If your child says, "juice," you try saying "want juice," or "more juice," or "yummy juice" etc.

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

Don't hesitate to use the same word many, many times over and over in your interactions with your child throughout the day.

FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

Get down to your child's physical level and join in what they are doing/playing/ watching. When you are interested in what they are doing, they will be more interested and open to what you are telling them.

PROVIDE COMMENTARY

Try to notice and then talk about what your child is doing or seeing or feeling or thinking. You can also talk about what you are doing or seeing.

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS YOU ASK -

Try to use sentences rather than questions when speaking with your child e.g., If your child says, "Doggie," you can say, "Brown doggie," instead of asking, "What colour is the doggie?"



There are several things parents can do in order to help their child go from success during sessions to success during everyday talking. When talking with your child you can

Working with your Speech-Language Pathologist...

By Robyn Church

SPEECH-LANGUAGE INTERVENTION FOR THE OLDER PRESCHOOLER- WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Children receive speech-language intervention for many different reasons.

A few common reasons are:

- to learn to pronounce certain sounds and words accurately
- to increase vocabulary
- to learn to use longer sentences
- to learn correct grammatical forms
- to learn to understand language better

The activities and goals targeted in therapy are different depending on what the child needs to learn. The frequency of the sessions also depends on the child's needs and the families' availability. Usually service is provided to families once every week or two. In some cases it is provided every month or two.

The ultimate goal of any speech-language therapy is the same. The desired outcome is that the child will generalize what they have learned. Generalizing speech and language means that the child uses the newly learned pronunciation or newly learned language form when they are talking in their everyday conversations.

Very often speech-language pathologists (SLP) hear from parents that their child sounds much better during their speech-language therapy sessions than they do at home. It is much easier for children to remember to use a new pronunciation or a new grammatical form in a focused, structured activity during "speech class" because they are thinking about it. Generalizing or remembering the new way to talk is much, much harder for children when they are going about their daily lives. Once children have begun to learn a new pronunciation or a new grammatical form it is a big step for them to start using it in everyday conversation. Since parents are usually the ones having regular conversations with their children, they play a crucial role in helping the children take this "generalizing" step.

Children do most of their everyday talking with their parents! Parents are children's favourite and often most frequent communication partner.

clearly and frequently model the targeted speech-language goal. You can also give your child prompting reminders and accurate feedback. The speech-language pathologist will teach you how to best help your child have generalized success with the targeted speech and language goals.



The role parents play in helping their children learn language is so important our program offers several different evening workshops for educating parents. We have workshops addressing two different areas of speech and language development being offered this spring. The Tyke Talk Workshop is for parents whose children are just beginning to talk. Early language facilitation strategies are discussed and demonstrated in these parent training classes. The Kindergarten Readiness Workshop is for parents wanting to learn more about pre-literacy skills. If learning about either of these areas will be helpful for you and your child you will be receiving a personal invitation to the appropriate workshop in the mail within the next month.

Walking for Bright Futures – Save this Date

It's that time again! Lace up your walking/running shoes and join us on **May**

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**27th for the Elks and Royal Purple
Annual Walk-a-thon.** The walk site has
changed this year to **Campbell Valley
Regional Park.** Watch for more details
coming soon.

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