

## Preschool Speech and Language Program of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties



Welcome! This binder is a great resource for you to use daily in your child care programs. It will provide you with information you need to help identify children who may have speech and language issues; strategies on how to talk to the parent or caregiver about these concerns; and where they can go for help for their child. It also provides you with some very important information that you can use day to day in your program to help all children develop speech and language skills.

Why are speech and language skills so important? Well....did you know that good communication skills are one of the best predictors of school success? The development of speech and language skills is closely linked to the development of reading and writing (literacy) and thus is crucial to the success of children as they move from your programs into school, through their school years and on into adulthood. Communication skills are also crucial to the social development of children, their ability to understand what is being said to them and to respond in a socially appropriate manner. It is therefore important to identify children at a young age that may have challenges but it is also important that all children have opportunities that develop these skills.

Speech, language and literacy development occurs during meaningful interactions, experiences, and activities. This is why your role as early childhood teachers is so important. Children will learn language and literacy skills through their own child initiated play but your important role is to make those play experiences meaningful opportunities to learn. This is especially important for those children who may present with challenges in the development of speech and language. It is important for you to be able to identify those children and provide the information to parents to get help. These children will need more attention in creating meaningful experiences. It is important for us to assist in helping these children.

Learning to read and write is a developmental process that begins at birth and builds on children's basic need to communicate. The parent of a young infant learns to understand the different cries of the infant (I'm hungry, I'm wet, I'm tired) because the infant is learning to communicate their various needs. Reading should also start in infancy and continue throughout life. The more stories read aloud, the more words the child is exposed to and the better he or she will be able to use these words in his communication.

Use this resource for all children in your program, not just those you feel may have a speech and language problem. Good luck and thank you for the work you do!  
Feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas!

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