

FACT SHEET



Give your child a strong foundation. Parents are a child's best role model for speech and language development. All children need a home environment where they are encouraged to communicate. By the time a child is four and a half they will have a vocabulary of approximately 2000 words, they will be able to listen well, and 90 to 100 percent of their speech will be understood. Most children will have mastered all English speech sounds by the age of seven or eight. By school age, a child should be able to speak in complete sentences with minor grammatical errors. A child's language skills continue to develop through the school years. From about age 9 to 19 most language growth occurs in the area of written language. If you are concerned about your child's speech and language development, talk to a speech-language pathologist.

Create an environment which encourages communication!

- ✓ Be a model for correct pronunciation but don't make your child repeat after you when he/she has said something wrong.
- ✓ Read with your child and talk about what you read. Connect what you read to your child's or family's own experiences.
- ✓ Talk about things as they happen.
- ✓ Listen carefully and give your child enough time to speak.
- ✓ Don't interrupt.
- ✓ Use a slow, natural rate of speech yourself when speaking to your child.
- ✓ Give your child the opportunity to make verbal choices, such as "do you want an apple or an orange?"
- ✓ Play guessing games like "I spy" and other word games.
- ✓ Play rhyming word games and read books written in rhyme to your child.
- ✓ Read alphabet books together. Talk about the first sound as well as the first letter of each word.
- ✓ Imaginative play using dolls or action figures can help your child model social interactions. Include greetings, comments, questions or small talk.
- ✓ Use open-ended questions like "What should we buy at the store?"

Warning signs for problems in speech or language development:

- ✓ Speaks using incomplete sentences
- ✓ Seems unable to follow oral directions
- ✓ Avoids, stumbles, or gets stuck on certain words and sounds
- ✓ Has difficulty playing or communicating with friends
- ✓ Struggles with reading and writing despite good oral language skills.
- ✓ Has problems swallowing or chewing
- ✓ Has frequent or long-term hoarseness
- ✓ Is unable to control the volume of his/her speech appropriately
- ✓ Has a history of chronic ear infections



Early detection is vital! If you suspect a problem consult your yellow pages or visit our website to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist near you.

www.caslpa.ca

