



All Special Kids

Contents

SPEECH & LANGUAGE

A Word from the Editor	1
Learning to Talk	2
How to Get the Most Out of Speech Therapy	3/5
Why Speech and Language Problem?	4/5
New Gifted Support	5
Kid's Social	6
May Seminar Talking and Playing	7
Geneva View Point	8
Bern View Point	9
ASK Camp	10/11
ASK Calendar	12

ASK - All Special Kids

case postale N°147
 2-4 Ch. de la Tourelle
 1200 Genève 19
<http://www.allspecialkids.org>
info@allspecialkids.org

All.Special.Kids

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

ISSUE NO.11 MAY/JUNE 2008

Dear Friends,

In this world of cyberspace, it continues to amaze me the number of parents that I'm in contact with, sharing their stories about their kids without ever having met them face to face. Judging from the mailing list, perhaps, I can say that I have 1000 friends and acquaintances, most of whom I've never met.

Recently I received a flyer from a local Dyslexia chapter, with a cartoon featured. The teacher asked the student sitting in front of her, which country she was from and the answer was, "I am from the land of Dyslexia".

Families with children who have special needs and learning difficulties, indeed speak different languages; terms and lingo unknown in a typical household. Think of these terms; applied behavior analysis, auditory processing delay, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, theasuit therapy, verbal behavior specialist, oral motor exercise, to name a few.

Our monthly parents get together has now grown to include parents from English and French language schools. Perhaps, we feel bonded through our common language; the terms and lingo that we learned to



Christopher, Catherine and Michael

embrace, the understanding of each other's struggles, frustration and tears.

Regardless of our different circumstances, one thing that I strongly believe in and steadfastly share with others is that we need to keep our faith and imagination strong that our kids will overcome their difficulties one day. Their success in life will partly depend upon how high you raise the bar for them to achieve integration into society as well adjusted and productive citizens.

My personal motto is: "The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen." (Frank Lloyd Wright)

Keep up the faith and happy reading!

Joy and the newsletter team

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution."

-Albert Einstein



LEARNING TO TALK

Learning to speak is a natural process, which follows a certain pattern. But, around 14-20% of preschool children and 5% of school-age children have problems with speech and language - though usually there are temporary and nothing to worry about.

“Around 14-20% of pre-school children and 5% of school-age children have problems with speech and language ”

It is terribly important that children feel they are understood. If they feel that parents and others are not focusing upon what they say, but how they say it, they may come to feel they are being attached for expressing their feeling and thoughts, which can have negative emotional consequences. Normal speech development covers a wide range of styles. Some children speak clearly but say very little; others chatter away but in a language others feel difficult to understand. In general, if your two-year-old child understands what is said to her, uses gestures and facial expressions to communicate, and uses some words, she's on track.

You can assess how well your child speaks in a number of ways:

- speech: sounds made and their clarity
- language: understanding of language, how wide her vocabulary is
- fluency: whether your child speaks easily or has a tendency to stutter
- articulation: how clear her pronunciation is
- voice: whether she speaks easily or has to force her voice or shout
- comprehension: exactly what she understands

Look out for:

Delayed language development: Your child speaks later or uses fewer words than expected. Don't worry, a number of studies have shown that children who

learn no language at all in their earliest months can learn it perfectly well later on. However, if your 18-month-old has fewer than 10 words, or appears not to understand simple commands, you may need the advice of a professional.

Difficult to Understand Speech:

This is when a child has problems pronouncing sounds or words (delayed phonological development). Some children have problems with sounds such as S, R, and SH, which are among the last sounds to be learned. The organization of these particular sounds is quite sophisticated, as they are made with the groove of the tongue. There are many adults who do not pronounce these sounds correctly.

Stuttering: Stammering

(stuttering) is normal between two and five years. It is four times more common in boys than in girls and runs in families. Usually, children who stutter or stammer cannot match their words to their fast moving brains and think far more quickly than they talk. They may repeat words or phrases or use many "ers" or "ums."

Screamers Voice: When your child

speaks or shouts with a hoarse or unhealthy breath. This is not typically something to worry about unless it becomes a prolonged problem where there is a risk of screaming damaging the throat.

Baby Talk: Your child regresses

and starts to use "baby-talk" --- quite common when there is a new baby in the family.

If your child presents with any of the aforementioned, it is best to get in contact with a certified speech-language pathologist, who can assess your child's speech and language difficulties and provide options for treatment.

by Dr. Diane Frazer (May seminar on Pg 7)



How to Get the Most Out of Speech Therapy?

Parents are an extremely important part of their child's therapy program. Parents help determine whether or not their child's experience in speech/language therapy is a success. One of the most frequent asked questions is "How can I help my child at home?" Since each child's problem is unique, that answer can be different for each parent. However, there are some basics that apply to all cases.

- The first thing a parent should do is to gain a good understanding of the child's speech problem. The speech/language specialist will go over the evaluation in detail and should provide a copy of the written evaluation as well.
- Secondly, get all the details of how the therapy will be provided. Knowing all the information will help you to prepare your child at home by telling him where he will be going, how often, and what his will be doing at that time.
- Third, demonstrate a supportive, positive attitude about the therapy to your child.
- Finally, integrate speech practice into daily activities as much as possible.

Here are some general activities to try. Choose those which fit your child's age and interest the best.

Speech Activities

1. If your child is working on a specific sound, help him to become aware of that sound by pointing out things in the environment that contain the sound. You can do this in a number of ways:
 - a. Go on a "Sound Walk". Hunt for things in or outside of the house that have the child's speech sound.

- b. Look through magazines for pictures or words that have his speech sound.
- c. When driving, look for things with the child's sound.
- d. Play a 20 Questions. Think of a word or object that has the child's speech sound. Have the child ask questions to figure out what the object is. If that is too difficult, give the child clues and have him guess.

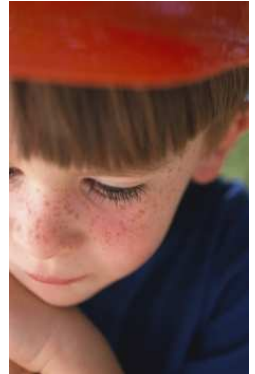
2. Once your child can say the sound correctly in words, have him practice saying some of those words for you. When that becomes easy, have him say them in sentences.

- a. Spelling Search - Have the child search his spelling list for words that have his sound in. Say them aloud.
- b. Silly Sentences - See who can make up the silliest sentence using one of your child's speech words.
- c. Challenge Sentences - See who can make up the sentence using the most words containing the speech sound.
- d. Tongue Twisters - Do you know a tongue twister that has your child's speech sound? Can you and your child make some up?

3. When your child is able to say his speech sound in words and sentences, have him begin to practice reading aloud using his sound correctly. For beginning readers, have him read from his reading book or story books he enjoys.

4. Begin to encourage your child to use the sound correctly for short periods of time during the day. This is called "carryover". Can your child carryover good speech every time he says his sister's name? his pet's name? his favorite food?

Article continued on page (5)



"Parents are an extremely important part of their child's therapy program. Parents help determine whether or not their child's experience in speech/language therapy is a success"





“Speech and language problems may be emotional, linked with a physical disability, or just due to delay, which often means, very simply, that some children develop later than others.”



WHY DO CHILDREN HAVE

It can sometimes be difficult to establish the exact cause of a child's speech and language difficulties. Speech and language problems may be emotional, linked with a physical disability, or just due to delay, which often means, very simply, that some children develop later than others.

Here are some possibilities to answer the “WHY” question:

Genetic: Some children inherit a tendency to later maturation of the speech-processing parts in the left-hemisphere of the brain.

Social-Environmental: Children whose parents talk more and listen to them tend to have more advanced speech.

Emotional Trauma: Stress at home, nursery or school can affect your child's speech.

Neurological: Late language development can be related to a neurological disorder such as autism, or due to specific brain damage.

Deafness: Repeated ear infections can cause “glue ear” --- a build-up of mucus that blocks hearing. If your child stops babbling at 6-9 months, her hearing should be checked.

Dyspraxia: This is when a child is disorganized in her speech. This may go along with the “clumsy child” syndrome in which the child also has problems organizing motor movements.

A child may choose to speak late because she is focusing on some aspect of her development --- for example, a child absorbed in motor development may spend all day running and climbing.

Routine developmental checks as a toddler, may pick up or help prevent early speech and language problems. Developmental reviews are carried out at different stages by different health professionals; but guidelines suggest that one takes place at 18 months and a second between three and four years. Your health professional can use these reviews to assess your child's emerging speech --- its clarity, how well she understands language, the range of her vocabulary, and the complexity of her sentences.

Apparent speech problems can cause distress, so consult someone you trust. It is important to consult a speech and language pathologist/therapist. With your help, this therapist can help you assess your child's fluency in the context of her general health and development. As well as speaking and listening with your child, she may also look at other aspects of your child's communication, such as how she interacts and plays with others.

What parents can do:

- Talk to your child when you are playing together.
- Enjoy songs and nursery rhymes together, especially those with actions.
- Gain your child's attention when you want to talk together.
- Listen to her carefully and give her time to finish.
- Take turns to speak and encourage other members of the family to take turns also.
- Slow down your rate of talking.
- Talk about things as they happen,

SPEECH & LANGUAGE PROBLEM?

(Continued from the previous page)

for example, as you are running water for a bath or taking groceries out of their bags.

- Increase her vocabulary by giving choices, for example, "Would you like the apple or the grape juice?"

Most importantly, remain relaxed and open. Almost all children can sense anxiety. Anxiety only creates further speech and language problems.

Article contributed by Dr. Diane Frazer, Speech Therapist and Verbal Behavior Specialist

NEW PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Support Group for Parents of Gifted and Talented Children

Starting September 2008, we will be offering an evening support group dedicated to the parents of gifted children. Both French and English speaking parents are welcome. This first support meeting will be co-hosted by Association Suisse pour les Enfants Précoces (<http://www.asep-suisse.org/>), a French local support group for gifted children.

ASK is in need of volunteer parents for the following positions:

1. Program Coordinator, who will organize the monthly parents get together.
2. Kid's Social Coordinator, who will organize the monthly supervised kids outings.

We plan to invite guest speakers to put a special focus on this specific issue.

Parents who are interested in joining this support group can contact info@allspecialkids.org for more information and volunteer opportunities.

"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult." –Segoyewatha, [Red Jacket]

How to get the most out of speech therapy?

Continued from page (3)

5. Once your child is able to use good speech for longer periods of time, try these conversational activities.

- a. Make a phone call using good speech.
- b. Use good speech all during supper.
- c. Use good speech in the car on the way to practice, lessons, or school.
- d. Use good speech while going over homework.

6. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your child's speech therapist.

The keys are to keep speech practice fun and to teach your child that good speech is not just for speech class. Don't let speech practice become a source of conflict. Do not pick times when your child is tired or upset to expect good speech. Praise your child as he acquires new speech skills.

This article was adapted from an article by ©1998 Carol Casserly, MA, CCC-SLP Newton, NJ
<http://www.angelfire.com/nj/speechlanguage/Articles.howtohelp.html>



MONTHLY KID'S SOCIAL

- by Karen Wilkins

COMMENTS

"It was very enjoyable"

"The children had a nice time and ... made friends with..."

"She had fun, I think she would like to see S again"

"He is so excited to do this"

"It was great"

"The best outing so far"

"It was so fun Can I take lessons?"



"The last two Kids' Social outings couldn't have been more different: March's activity turned out to be a small affair (due to illness and holidays) with a pizza evening at Le Lemman in Commungy. The group had a table right next to the preparation area so we could see the chefs twirling the dough and making the pizzas. Everyone had an enjoyable time and it was also a good opportunity for two children new to the group - and their mothers - to get to know a couple of the others.

April's outing welcomed yet another new child to the group. This time we met at the Belle Ferme in Gex, where they tried their hand at pony riding. Most of the children now know each other and were soon smiling and - the girls especially - talking to each other. After a small ride in the barn, they took the ponies outside and after helping to take off the saddles and stirrups were allowed in the stables where the larger ponies were. Judging from their smiles, they all enjoyed themselves.

Unfortunately, the chocolate factory was unable to accommodate us outside school hours, so is now not taking place. The next outing is on May 25th at the Migros park at Signal de Bougy near Aubonne where the children can play, make bread, climb trees (if they are brave), play crazy golf and other games. We hope that the children in the Lausanne area will be able to join us for this and I look forward to seeing everyone again then.

For more details on ASK kids' Social please contact Karen on 079 630 5270 or E-mail: karen.wilkins@allspecialkids.org

UPCOMING SEMINAR

TALKING AND PLAYING:

Simple Communication Tools Every Parents should Know

By Dr. Diane Fraser, Ed.D BCBA

Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Verbal Behavior Specialist

Place: Webster University, Jura Building Rm # 13/15

Date: Saturday, 24th May 2008, Time: 09:00—12:30 hr

Fees: Members -150CHF, Non-Members - 250CHF,

For more information and registration contact: info@allspecialkids.org

http://www.allspecialkids.org/ask.php?x=Events_ProgramDetails&y=OnlineRegistrationForm

Helping your child reach their communication potential

Could this be your child?

- Some children understand what is said to them, but can't use words to make themselves understood.
- Some have dyspraxia - difficulty in making the movements which produce speech.
- Some children speak clearly in single words, but have difficulties linking them together, often leaving words out
- Some children have difficulties with listening and attention skills, which affect the development of language.
- Some children have problems with short-term memory, which prevent them using complex sentences.
- Some have sequencing problems, and find it difficult, to put words in the right order.
- Some children can speak clearly and at length, but often fail to get the point of conversation, making inappropriate comments and replies.
- Some children have difficulties understanding abstract ideas like time, emotions or make-believe. These children have trouble connecting ideas and using language socially.
- Some children have profound difficulties relating to the outside world. Many of these will be described as having 'autistic tendencies'.



“A tantrum can last up to 2 hours and he has little concept of danger. Every day is an adventure!”



GENEVA VIEWPOINT

Our son, aged 5, has Autism. That is the easiest way to describe it, although diagnostically he has Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). This means that he has some of the criteria to be diagnosed Autistic, but not all.

He cuddles, hugs and gives kisses. He looks at us straight in the eye. In his own special way, he even makes jokes. However he has needed intensive therapy to learn how to ask for water to drink. He may greet someone by saying a name or line from a TV show. A tantrum can last up to 2 hours and he has little concept of danger. Every day is an adventure!

He was diagnosed by the *Guidance Infantile* in Geneva at age 3. My husband and I may have had an inkling before, but discounted it - there were so many other reasons for his behaviour and speech.

Twelve ear infections his first year; grommets inserted and adenoids removed at 14 months old; the grommets twisted after 6 months, he had almost no hearing; we moved from London to Geneva - so a difference of language in his playschool environment; his 2nd operation at 27 months to remove huge tonsils and insert another set of grommets. Of course his lack of speech was due to his limited hearing, we thought.

But then it didn't improve much. Was it just the French school environment and English at home? His wonderful teacher and school nurse suggested an assessment by a speech therapist at the *Guidance Infantile*. After numerous consultations and a second opinion we received the diagnosis. Thankfully the speech therapist was also a psychologist, so was able to interpret the symptoms. And then what to do?

The suggestions included: Continue at the French school, see a psychologist twice a week to work on his fear of doctors, and put his name on the very long waiting list for special needs facilities in Geneva. Not much else.

We started seeing a lovely child-friendly psychologist twice a week. From my Google research I decided to change his diet to gluten-free, casein-free and additive free. It wasn't easy but, the effects were dramatic and visible within a week: he was more alert, stopped lining up his toys, thankfully stopped waking 5 times a night, his body shape changed, his mood swings evened out - life for the family improved.

By pure chance, we were introduced to OVA (www.ovassociation.com) which trains psychologists in ABA therapy which teaches children with autism to communicate (verbally or non-verbally), life skills, e.g., toileting, dressing, eating, etc., addresses behaviour issues and so much more. His progress gives us renewed hope.

June 2007, we sadly decided to remove him from school where he was loved and accepted and put him in an English language school with a special needs section, to maximise his learning potential. But perhaps he and the school weren't ready for *his* special needs. So with a dedicated, patient team of therapists, he now has around 30 hours a week of therapy, mostly at home with 10 hours a week at one of OVA's 4 centres.

There are not any other feasible options in English for him at the moment that I am aware of. I do know of families that have left Geneva to find better facilities for their children with autism. The future is uncertain but bright with progress.

M.K

ASK FAMILY FUN DAY IN JUNE



3RD ANNUAL ASK'S FAMILY SUMMER FUN DAY

**Sunday 29th June 2008 from 2.30pm
Venue To be Announced**

**Swimming
Barbecue, Picnic
Fun Games and Activities**

**For more information and RSVP please contact
Karen Wilkins at 079 630 5270
E-mail: Karen.wilkins@allspecialkids.org
Alternate E-mail: info@allspecialkids.org**

“The only resolution that truly takes shape throughout the years is : make sure the children’s needs are met”

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR ASK?

“You have it easily in your power to increase the sum total of this world’s happiness now. How? By giving a few words of sincere appreciation to someone who is lonely or discouraged. Perhaps you will forget tomorrow the kind words you say today, but the recipient may cherish them over a lifetime.”

Dale Carnegie



ASK
ALL SPECIAL KIDS

2008 SUMMER CAMPS

July 7-11, 14-18
August 11-13, 18-22

RECREATION & SOCIAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES

FOR AGE GROUPS:
5-7 8-10 11-13

NEW this summer
Remedial Academic Morning Program

CHF100 DISCOUNT on early registrations

additional CHF50 DISCOUNT for each sibling

Eidelweiss International School
39 rue Peillonex, 1225 Chêne-Bourg

For more information on fees or contact details, see
ALLSPECIALKIDS.ORG



**Skills building through constructive play and activities
!! Optional Tutoring Morning Program !!**

All children aged 5 to 18 welcome

July 7-11; July 14-18, August 11-15; August 18-22

Recreation and Social Skills Activities 9 to 17 hr: 775chf per week
Tutoring Morning Program: 9 to 13 hr: 550chf, 9 to 17 hr 1000chf

100chf discount for early registration received by 10th April, 2008
50chf discounts for siblings

For registration & more information visit <http://www.allspecialkids.org>

Contact: petal.jaffrey@allspecialkids.org

Phone: 078 800 1249

ASK CAMP NEWS

by Petal Jaffrey

The warm weather appears to have arrived and the summer holidays are fast approaching. We at ASK are excited about our upcoming summer program.

We have improved and added new features to our last year social skills activities program which was such a success with both parents and the kids. In addition to having a speech therapist, Anita Godson, we now also welcome an occupational therapist, Kristine Jaccoud to our team. Each of them will be coming twice a week to add their expertise to our activity based social skills program.

In addition, we will be taking several field trips, as we did last year. One of the field trip is to the science museum. This is a fantastic museum, set up to welcome children. Most of the exhibits are experiential and the children are free to learn through doing. Best of all, they can touch everything! Following this idea of learning through doing, we have also added some science experiments for the children to do.

We have also used the new location of the camp to our advantage and have planned trips to the lake, as well as visits to the Jet d Eau and perhaps even get splashed by it, weather permitting.

Our cooking day was so much fun last year that we have incorporated culinary activities into every camp day. Its lots of fun, tasty and it gives the children a chance to practice some life skills.

As always, all of our activities have been carefully chosen and modified to encourage social skills by focusing on communication, cooperation, turn taking, compromise, teamwork among many other important skills.

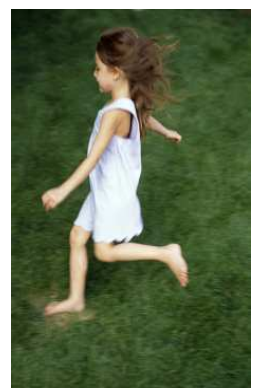
In addition to the improvements to the camp program itself, we have also added an optional morning tutoring program. Now you have the options of sending your children to the full day social skills camp program, the tutoring program (morning only) or the tutoring program followed by the camp afternoons, allowing the children to have the best of both world. The tutoring program is headed by Kay Diethelm, who is a Dyslexia specialist and has 30 plus years of teaching experience. She will have several assistants who are also qualified teachers.

Please contact me Petal Jaffrey if you have any questions. I look forward to meeting you and your children this summer.

E-mail: petal.jaffrey@allspecialkids.org



“As always, all of our activities have been carefully chosen and modified to encourage social skills by focusing on communication, cooperation, turn taking, compromise, teamwork among many other important skills”



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ASK-Geneva Upcoming Events

MAY 2008

MONTHLY PARENTS GET TOGETHER
8th May - 10:00 - 12:00hr

**C.A.R.E. - Community Assistance
Resource Enrichment Program**
24th and 31st January

KID'S SOCIAL
RUN FREE at Signal de bougy
Games, bread making,
Saturday 25th May from 2pm

SEMINAR & LECTURE
See page 7 for details

JUNE 2008

MONTHLY PARENTS GET TOGETHER
5th June - 10:00 - 12:00hr

ASK's FAMILY SUMMER FUN. Swim & BBQ
Sunday, 29th June 2008 from 2.30pm

ASK/Bern-Chapter Upcoming Events

MAY 2008

MONTHLY PARENTS GET TOGETHER
20th May - 19.00-21.00hr
Restaurant Desperados, Bern
RSVP: roxdan@bluewin.ch

JUNE 2008

MONTHLY PARENTS GET TOGETHER
17th June - 9am-11am at Mary Kay's
RSVP: mk.zumbach@bluewin.ch

JULY 2008
July summer break

*No longer forward nor behind
I look in hope and fear;
But grateful take the good I find,
The best of now and here.*

John G. Whittier

