

Better Together

How RECEs and Speech-Language Pathologists Work Together in Windsor

Erin Haldeman has experienced first-hand the positive impact that effective collaboration between different professions can have on a child. Through drop-in visits at the *Connections Early Years Family Centre* in Windsor, Ontario, her daughter's language delay was recognized and addressed by a team of professionals working together through a program called Talk 2 Me.

“We started the program when my daughter was 14 months old after we noticed that her communication was a little behind because she was a preemie,” says Haldeman. “They [the staff] were great because they had lots of information and tips for helping us get organized, get her speech going and get her interacting.”

The improvement in her daughter's language is one example of the successful interprofessional collaboration between RECEs and Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) in the Talk 2 Me program, which provides preschool speech and language services, infant hearing services and blind-low vision early intervention for children from birth until they go to school.



Interprofessional collaboration is an important part of the work of early childhood educators, where they and other professionals work together to plan meaningful learning experiences based on children's individual needs.

As the program assistant for Talk 2 Me, Joan Moser RECE conducts the phone screenings for prospective participants. Moser also works with two speech-language pathologists to co-facilitate two speech-language programs, Toddler Talk and Say & Play.

“The phone screen goes over a lot of developmental areas of the child – physical, gross and fine motor [skills],” says Moser. “It provides a baseline of where a child should be at different ages.”

Better Together How RECEs and Speech-Language Pathologists Work Together in Windsor



Amy Taylor RECE works at Connections and appreciates the benefits to children and families when different professionals work together as a team.

“If any of the families recognize that their child needs help with any speech-language challenges I’m able to get help for the family,” says Taylor. “They [the families] are already at a place where they’re comfortable with staff because they see the speech-language pathologists walking through the building.”

Eva Tsakalis SLP is one of the speech-language pathologists who works with the RECEs. She also manages the Talk 2 Me program and with Moser, works with families to support their children’s language skills.

“RECEs bring their knowledge of early childhood development,” says Tsakalis. “RECEs help us look at the whole child in terms of their development and how we [RECEs and speech-language pathologists] can work with them. For families who come to the Ontario Early Years Centre, it becomes a second home. It’s the best thing for families if they’re using the strategies here and we’re all working towards their goals.”

Speech-language pathology is also a self-regulated profession governed by the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario

(CASLPO). Both professions follow a code of ethics, are held to standards and require mandatory continuous learning.

Barbara Brown RECE, Executive Director of Connections, believes families benefit the most from the interprofessional collaboration.

“When you have professionals doing different things, but all working with families with young children, you can see the connections,” says Brown. “Being able to make the programming accessible and easier for families to navigate is the biggest benefit.”

How does interprofessional collaboration benefit children when it comes to curriculum and pedagogy?

Standard II: C.4 requires that RECEs “Respond to the uniqueness of individuals and groups of children. They identify appropriate strategies, access the necessary resources and design curriculum to ensure full participation of all children, taking into account ability, cultural and linguistic diversity and Indigenous identity.” This article’s real-life experience demonstrates how RECEs identify and access the necessary resources to support children’s ability so that all children are included.

The focus on the importance of interprofessional collaboration between RECEs and other regulated professionals gained more attention with full-day kindergarten in Ontario, where RECEs and teachers work together to deliver the curriculum. Together the College of Early Childhood Educators and the Ontario College of Teachers produced a useful resource, [*Exploring Interprofessional Collaboration and Ethical Leadership*](#) for teachers and RECEs.

Article updated from the original published in *Connexions*, Fall Winter 2016 Volume 8, Issue 1