**Upcoming Events**

Join TALK at the Hillsdale Mall for SHINE!

On April 2nd TALK will be participating in the SHINE Educational Fair for Special Needs Children. Co-sponsored by Parenting on the Peninsula, this event will focus on programs, resources, and services relevant to children with special needs in the Bay Area. The event will be held from 11am to 2pm in Macy’s Center Court. Come check it out!

May is Better Speech and Hearing Month!

During May, Speech Pathologists and Audiologists try to raise the public’s awareness of communication disorders and of the role of SLPs and AUDs in treating and preventing them. Look online at http://www.asha.org/bhsam/ for more information on how you can help!

Join us for Autism Speaks Walk on May 21st 2011!

Autism Speaks is one of the largest Autism research and advocacy organizations and is dedicated to funding research and increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders. TALK will be raising money and joining Bay Area families and professionals to support this worthy cause! If you would like to get involved or donate to this initiative, please talk to Sarah in the TALK office!

**What is a pediatric SLP?**

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) are also known as speech therapists, speech teachers, or speech pathologists. The titles are interchangeable and depend on the setting in which the individual works rather than their qualifications. SLPs are employed in schools, hospitals, private practices, skilled nursing facilities, Early Intervention programs, rehabilitation centers and a variety of other settings. We work with clients with varying diagnoses, of all ages from infants in the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) to adults in rehabilitation facilities who have suffered from traumatic brain injury. In the state of California, SLPs are licensed by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board, with the following minimum qualifications:

- Possess a master’s degree in communicative disorders or speech-language pathology
- Pass a national Praxis exam in speech-language pathology
- Complete a nine month clinical fellowship year under a qualified supervisor and possess the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP) from ASHA (American Speech and Hearing Association)

SLPs are trained in human communication, its disorders, and the disorders that affect it. SLPs use their knowledge in these areas to diagnose, treat and help prevent disorders which fall under the category of communication delays or disorders. Pediatric SLPs work with children with a variety of syndromes and disorders including, but not limited to, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down Syndrome and other forms of mental retardation, motor planning problems, hearing loss, stroke, traumatic brain injury, developmental delays or disorders, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, cleft palate, voice pathology, or emotional problems. Problems can be congenital, developmental, or acquired. It is estimated that approximately 10% of all children are in need of speech and language intervention. SLPs are a vital identifying children who are at risk, assessing, providing intervention, and developing appropriate programs to assist with generalization into both the home and school environments.

If you suspect that your child may have a speech or language problem, current research is showing that it is imperative that you have your child assessed and begin to receive intervention as soon as possible to decrease future problems in socially and in school. As you can see, SLPs provide a wide variety of services and provide treatment to individuals with a variety of needs.

Alexia D. Dorsa, M.S., CCC-SLP

Previously Published in Parenting on the Peninsula


**Augmentative & Alternative Communication: Why aren’t we just talking about it?**

Introducing the iPad

Touch-screen, portable devices, such as the Apple iPad, are quickly becoming a part of children’s everyday activities. Here are some cool applications that can be used on an iPad to encourage speech, language, and communication:

- Pocket Phonics — Application that focuses on teaching letter sounds and sound blending, two important pre-reading skills.
- Proloquo2Go — Full AAC solution with over 7000 symbols, natural sounding voices, automatic conjugation, and more.
- iPrompts — Visual prompting tool to help create visual schedules and choose prompts for children.
- Model Me Going Places — Photographic social stories modeling appropriate behavior in several everyday routines (e.g., going to a restaurant, hairdresser, etc.)

**SLP Question of the Month**

Q: Motor Speech, Articulation, and Phonology — What’s the difference?

A motor speech disorder is characterized by deficits in the strength and coordination of the muscles that are necessary for speech production. There are two main types of motor speech disorders: apraxia, difficulty with motor planning & disorders, difficulty with motor strength. These two types often occur simultaneously. An articulation disorder refers to difficulties placing the tongue, lips and teeth in the correct position to produce individual sounds. Children with articulation disorders usually have difficulty with the later developing sounds such as “s,” “th” and “r.” With a phonological disorder, children have not learned the rules for how sounds fit together to form words. They can often produce sounds correctly in isolation, but in words, they show errors that follow a pattern (e.g., all sounds usually made at the back of the mouth are made at the front). To learn more about these disorders, look online at: www.apraxia-kids.net

**Is my child ready for Kindergarten?**

When children approach five years of age, parents face the ultimate question: is my child ready for Kindergarten? Research shows that there is no one single factor that can determine kindergarten readiness — instead it is important to look at your child’s development and skills in many different areas. Kindergarten is a big change for many children, and it is important to set them up for success. From a language perspective, it is important to consider both how your child receives and processes language, as well as how they express themselves. Here are some language skills that are important for being ready for Kindergarten:

**Understanding Language**

- 1) Understanding vocabulary related to position, direction, size and comparison
- 2) Listening to and following four to five step directions
- 3) Expressing themselves

**Early Literacy**

- 1) Recognizing some letters
- 2) Recognizing rhyming words
- 3) Understanding how to hold and “read” through a book
- 4) Identifying sounds in words

For more information on these and other language skills, please feel free to contact us!

**Putting language into everyday routines**

Children learn language from hearing it. Talking to your child as you go about daily routines exposes them to language. Waiting in anticipation tells your child that you are interested in what they have to say, and encourages them to say more!

For many parents, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is a term that causes confusion and even anxiety. In fact, it is an area of Speech Language Pathology that can increase the communication skills of children of all ages, and with all kinds of challenges and strengths. AAC is a term that encompasses many different strategies that build on and expand a child’s communication skills and provide an alternative method of communication for children who are non-verbal. These strategies aim to make communication frequent and fun! Many parents are concerned that implementing AAC strategies will stop their child from talking. However, past and current research clearly shows the opposite. Giving children another way to communicate with the world around them encourages interaction with others and promotes language and speech development. AAC decreases the frustration that comes from not being able to get a message across. As with all interventions, AAC is most effective when it is introduced early in development. An AAC assessment can determine which strategies would be most effective for an individual child. No matter what strategies are used, the goal is always to increase communication and facilitate language development.

For more information on AAC, contact TALK or look online at: http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC.htm

**TALK Tips**

Here are some things you can do with your children to encourage speech and language development!

Speak slowly and break down directions

SLowing your rate of speech can do with your children to increase communication for alternative method of communication skills.

Put language into everyday routines

Children learn language from hearing it. Talking to your child as you go about daily routines exposes them to language. Waiting in anticipation tells your child that you are interested in what they have to say, and encourages them to say more!

Observe, wait and listen to give your child a chance to talk

Sometimes parents are in such a rush that they forget that their children need time to process and respond to language. Waiting in anticipation tells your child that you are interested in what they have to say, and encourages them to say more!

**Recent Research in SLP**

A recent article in the American Journal of Speech Language Pathology investigated peer responses to preschool children who stutter.

The researchers videotaped preschool children during outdoor play and characterized peer responses to the stuttering of four of the children. The results showed that the majority of peer responses in stuttering were either positive or neutral—only 25% of responses involved the peers getting upset or confused. The researchers concluded that preschool children are very tolerant of dysfluencies and are more likely to respond positively than negatively.

**THERAPIST’S CORNER**

Anya Ashour! Did you know that before Anya worked at TALK, she took a trip to the Gili Islands in Indonesia? Her favorite part of the islands was that there were no cars or motorcycles!

Heather Angstadt! Did you know that before Heather worked at TALK she was an ABA instructor at a local autism organization? Heather loves applying the skills she learned to her work at TALK!