

Research into the Relationship between Communication Impairment in Children and Poor Social and Academic Outcomes Prove Therapy Needs to Focus on Building up Children's Confidence and Self Esteem

Groundbreaking research out of Australia, and published in the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research is showing a strong relationship between young children with articulation and language impairment and future challenges in reading and writing, as well as increases in reports of bullying and poor social relationships.

The study looked at over 4000 participants ages 4-5 years old, of which 24% were identified as having communication impairment. These same children were then re-evaluated at 7-9 years of age. Such outcome measures as parental and teacher questionnaires and child assessments were used to identify areas of challenge for these children, both academically and socially. Unlike other studies of its kind, this study also collected the children's own descriptions of satisfaction through questionnaires.

The study concluded that children with communication impairment had more challenges with reading, writing and overall school achievement than their peers. The children reported more incidences of bullying as well as difficulties forming personal social relationships with their peers.

The study concluded that it is important for teachers, parents and particularly Speech Language Pathologists to not only focus on the child's impairment during treatment but to make sure that treatment focuses on building up the child's self esteem and self confidence in order to help prevent these poor outcomes from occurring.

Margit Pukonen, Program Director at The Speech and Stuttering Institute agrees with the conclusions of this study and says, "One of the comments we hear frequently from parents is that their child's confidence improves during our program. This is not surprising since we design our therapy programs to support this outcome. We select motivating activities to engage the children, we set goals that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for each child and then provide the type and amount of support the child needs to be successful. Each step in the therapy process is carefully monitored and adjusted. In group therapy the children also have the opportunity to practice new skills with their peers in situations that are similar to everyday life. Children's confidence flourishes under these conditions. Nothing breeds success like success."

Lucas Tonic-Langley, who has received treatment through our school-aged scholarship fund, was so grateful to SSI that he made these wonderful pen holders for some of our staff!



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Please help us to give the gift of speech.

The Speech & Stuttering Institute does not turn people away due to an inability to pay fees. We provide subsidy support to individuals who qualify so that our fee for service programs can be available to everyone. But to do so, we must rely on the generosity of people like you.

It starts with one gift



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New Designation as a "Centre for Training and Development" Proves S&SI Research Initiatives A Worthwhile Endeavour

We are pleased to announce that the Ontario Government has offered The Speech and Stuttering Institute the prestigious designation of a "Centre for Training and Development". The S&SI has a three-fold mandate that includes the treatment of clients, the training of professionals and engaging in cutting edge research initiatives. After many years of following this mandate, the Government of Ontario has recognized our efforts and rewarded us with this important title of distinction.

Why is the engagement in research so important at The Speech and Stuttering Institute?

The Speech and Stuttering Institute has been a lead agency focusing on speech and stuttering disorders for many years, and has developed a solid reputation for delivering high quality services that rely on evidence-based treatment.

Evidence-based treatment is treatment or therapy that has been proven to be effective through the findings of high quality research. The Speech and Stuttering Institute consistently strives to evaluate its programs in order to ensure the provision of the most current, efficient and effective programs for the children, teens and adults who seek our services.



oneword

fall newsletter 2012

The Speech & Stuttering Institute
Olena Sapojnikova, Designer
Shelley Sonshine, Editor

Research helps us to determine which treatments are most helpful for specific speech challenges, helps to determine the intensity level of the programs (such as once vs twice per week), and research also gives us insight into the actual brain functions and physical changes that can occur as a result of treatment. Through research, we can come to understand the neural underpinnings of many speech related disorders and can share these results with our clients and their families.

Researchers at The Speech and Stuttering Institute have just completed a major study on motor speech disorders that has clearly illustrated that the treatment model in use at the S&SI (twice a week therapy for ten weeks) results in greater speech gains than less intensive formats. This important information will be shared provincially and community clinicians will have empirical data that can assist in determining therapy schedules.

Variables such as parent involvement, amount of home practice and the amount of self-monitoring required to achieve fluency are also constantly examined, as they strongly correlate with therapy outcomes.

Research is what sets The Speech and Stuttering Institute apart from many other agencies. Our research laboratory, headed by Dr. Aravind Namasivayam, is a hub of exciting work and enlightening findings. We share these findings with our colleagues through our presentations, peer reviewed publications and training workshops both here in Toronto and throughout the Province.



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It starts with one word

CAMP SUMMER SPEAK

For three weeks in both July and August this past summer, The Speech and Stuttering Institute once again offered Camp Summer Speak.

Stuttering camp took place in July for children ranging in age from 7 -15 years old. Children aged 7-9 years old learned five fluency enhancing techniques through fun activities, crafts and group games. The 10-15 year old program was based on the “Road to Fluency Program” developed at The Speech and Stuttering Institute. Though there was a sizable amount of material to learn, the children participated in fun activities designed to help with the transfer of

their skills such as games, videotaped presentations, snack activities and prepared speeches delivered to parents at the final session.

Speech Camp occurred for three weeks in August. Two groups of children were involved in the Speech Camp; JK age (4-5 years old) and SK age (5-6 year olds). Weekly themes included “camping & the outdoors”, “pets & going to the vet”, and “cooking”. These themes created the context for teaching specific speech, language and literacy skills.

Parent feedback for the camps was very positive. Parents reported that their children loved camp and they observed changes in their children’s social skills, behaviour, confidence, awareness of letters and sounds, and their ability to produce speech sounds.

Camp Summer Speak is made possible through the generosity of the RBC Foundation, as well as with modest client fees.

Meet our Speech Language Pathologist Debbie Mantziouras



How long have you been working here at The S&SI?

I have been working at the SSI for just over a year. I joined the team in September of 2011.

Where did you receive your degree?

I received my undergraduate Health Sciences Degree at the University of Western Ontario and my Master of Health Sciences Degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Toronto.

Tell us about your role(s) at SSI

My role at The SSI is divided between two different programs. My primary caseload comes from assessing and providing intensive individual therapy programs for 3 year old children with moderate to severe motor speech disorders. My secondary caseload comes from assessing and providing intensive individual and/or group therapy to children in our 4 year old program who have been referred to our Centre throughout the GTA. This program allows the children to build on their skills in a more socially interactive environment with their peers.

Do you have an inspirational story that showcases why you love working at SSI?

The children and their families who come to our Institute are absolutely amazing and have made me fall in love with working here! From the devotion of parents and grandparents in coming to the SSI so frequently and their ability over the weeks of therapy to be able to incorporate goals in their daily activities, to the continuing progress in these children from having few single words, to putting words together more clearly, and feeling more confident to interact with family members and peers, is all very rewarding!

What are your interests outside of work?

Outside of work I enjoy roller blading, skating and Greek dancing. Recently I’ve really started to have a passion for cooking!

Fundraising at SSI

King Harold’s Speech

On Thursday November 8th, The Speech and Stuttering Institute honoured Harold G. Shipp at a tribute gala at The Arcadian Loft. Harold Shipp is a well-known developer who helped build the City of Mississauga from farm land into the great metropolis it is today.



Harold has led a full, successful and accomplished life, despite having lived with a stutter since he was a young child. Harold never let his stutter prevent him from striving for, and ultimately achieving and surpassing his goals. His story is inspirational to all those with speech and language challenges. The evening was a huge success in raising both dollars and awareness for the Institute.

WALK FOR STUTTERING AWARENESS

On September 23rd, Greg O’Grady, a graduate of one of The Speech and Stuttering Institute’s speech reconstruction programs called the Precision Fluency Shaping Program (PFSP) organized the first annual 1k/5k Walk for Stuttering Awareness. Having been so grateful to Dr. Bob Kroll and the staff at SSI for their hard work and dedication to People Who Stutter (PWS), Greg decided to create the walk and donate all the proceeds back to The Speech and Stuttering Institute.

The walk took place at Taylor Creek Park and featured performances by Canadian Idol finalist Oliver Pigott, and R&B Singer Dave Espeut. 13- year old Jake Zeldin, who uses rap music as a way to cope with his own stuttering, served as Walk Ambassador. The day was a huge success and raised thousands of dollars for the Institute. Thank you to Greg and his entire committee of dedicated volunteers for pulling off an incredible first walk. We look forward to next year’s event!



Kids Give Back!

Last year, Samantha Fisher was introduced to an assignment at her school called “Project Give Back”. She had to choose a charity and create a presentation for her class. Samantha chose The Speech and Stuttering Institute as her charity of choice. In her own words, in a letter to our Executive Director Bob Kroll, Samantha explains her project:



“Dear Dr. Kroll,

My name is Samantha Fisher and I am a grade 4 student at Associated Hebrew Schools. I was assigned a project to teach my class about a charity that has touched my heart. I chose your charity, because my father had a stutter and went to The Speech and Stuttering Institute for treatment. For my activity I invited you to come and speak to my class. You taught them about people with speech issues. My class really learned a lot. Thank you for coming and speaking to my class. Thank you for also sending me an information package.

Sincerely, Samantha Fisher”

Having been so inspired by her school project, Samantha also decided to donate her birthday money to The Speech and Stuttering Institute. Thank you, Samantha!