

Dear Parents,

Your child is getting ready to enter Kindergarten! Congratulations! Strong listening and speaking skills are important for your child to participate fully in classroom activities like routines, story time, and play. The ability to talk and to understand is also important for learning to read and write. **See below for ten tips to support your child's speech and language skills.**

If you have any concerns about how your child is doing in the areas of speaking and listening in either English or in the language you speak to her/him at home, contact **Preschool Speech & Language Program** to have your child seen by a speech-language pathologist. You can call **1-833-575-KIDS (5437)** or complete an [online referral](#). Please note the referral cut-off dates:

- **March 31, 2025:** Deadline for referrals to receive assessment, intervention and support to transition to school
- **May 31, 2025:** Deadline for referrals to receive an assessment and support to transition to school

You **do not** need a doctor's referral for this service. It is important for children to be seen for services as soon as possible in order to benefit the most. **To find out if your child would benefit from a referral see the [Communication Checklist](#).** Here are some excellent [tips and strategies](#) for you to help your child while you are waiting for speech and language services

If you speak a language other than English, it is important for your child to hear good language models. Speaking your home language is very important and **will not** prevent your child from learning English.

If you are concerned about your child's listening and/or speaking skills, contact your doctor who may arrange for a referral to an audiologist for a hearing test. Audiology services **may** be covered through OHIP in those clinics with an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) physician on site.

Your local EarlyON Child and Family Centre offers support in getting your child ready for school. These centres are for parents/caregivers and their children up to the age of 6 years. They offer a variety of activities for families. They also provide information about child development and services to support that development. For more information or to find a centre near you: [Find an EarlyON child and family centre](#)

It is important to share any reports/information (i.e. hearing test results, Preschool Speech and Language Program report, medical reports, etc.) with your child's school as early as possible. This will help your child's teacher better understand his/her strengths and needs upon entry to Kindergarten.

Janet Hogg
Speech-Language Pathologist



Getting Ready for Kindergarten -

Top 10 Ways to Support Your Child's Speech and Language Skills

1 What do I do next? Help your child explain how to do things! Use everyday routines like getting ready for bed, making a snack, and doing the laundry. [Talk about what happens first, next, then and last.](#)

2 Read Stories, Tell Stories, Ask Questions Read to your child in your home language. Talk about the pictures. Ask **who, what, where, when** and **why** questions. Retell the story together. Watch this video for tips on [how to read stories to your child.](#)

3 Act it out! Put on a play! After you read a story, act it out. You can even use apps like *Puppet Pals*, *Book Creator* or *Toontastic 3D* to retell it. (Available through Apple/Google app stores). Children increase their understanding of stories when they retell them.

4 Talk about what belongs together Talk about which foods are fruit and which are vegetables and why? Have your child help to sort the laundry by shirts, pants, socks, etc. Teaching new words by category helps with understanding and remembering them.

5 What's that sound? Every week, focus on one letter of the alphabet and the sound it makes. Look for words in your environment that start with it. For example: Letter of the week is 'm'. What sound does it make? Have your child find 3 words in a flyer that start with the letter 'm'. Talk about the words. Talk about the beginning sounds.

6 Practice speaking clearly. If your child needs help speaking clearly, show him/her in front of a mirror. Talk about how your lips and tongue move. Contact [Preschool Speech and Language Program – Surrey Place](#) before your child starts school if you have any concerns.

7 1,2,3,4...Which one is more? Talk math! Use math words like *zero, three, more, less, full, half* when talking with your child. Ask your child: "Do you want *half* a cup of juice or a *whole* cup of juice?" "Do you want *more* ice cream or *less* ice cream than dad?" Math concepts are rooted in language!

8 Write on! Are you going shopping? Have your child write the shopping list! Bath time? Use bath crayons or foam letters and practice letter sounds, spelling his/her name and making words.

9 Games for more than just fun! Games teach listening, talking, literacy and social skills...and they're fun! Try a game like "I Spy". Take turns giving clues to allow another person to guess an object. You can focus on concepts (i.e. "I spy something that is **above** the fridge/**beside** the chair), provide practice asking questions (i.e. "Is it a...?"), try initial sound identification (i.e. "I spy something that starts with the sound ssss"), and provide opportunities to practice turn-taking. [Click here for more ideas!](#)

10 Use a visual schedule to get ready for back to school. Use this [sample schedule](#) (scroll down in link) or create your own with [these suggestions](#).

SLP Google Site: <http://bit.ly/slpcconnection>

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