

## Your child's most important language teacher is.....YOU!!

Phone: (02)88504253  
joanned@internode.on.net

In 2011, two researchers from Vanderbilt University, Megan Roberts and Ann Kaiser, reviewed 18 different studies which evaluated parent-implemented intervention offered to parents.

The authors begin their journal article by citing research that shows that children's communication improves when parents:

- interact more with their child
- respond to their child's attempts to communicate
- use "child-directed speech" (talk about what the child is focused on or interested in, using simplified, melodic speech)
- emphasize important words in a sentence (e.g. "you're eating a BANANA!")
- expand on what the child has said (e.g. Child says, "Key". Parent says, "Yes that's the key for the car.")

To measure effectiveness of the programs, the reviewers made sure that children with a wide variety of communication difficulties were represented, such as:

- children with Language Impairment
- children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- children with Developmental Delay

The progress of the children included in the review was compared to the progress of children in a "control group", who received:

- no therapy; or
- therapy delivered by a speech-language pathologist; or
- other types of services in the community



### What the Study Review Found

1. As a result of participating in parent training programs, **parents successfully learned the strategies and used them when interacting with their child.**
2. **Parents had a positive effect on their child's communication development.** Parents' use of strategies led to improvements in their child's expressive skills (nonverbal communication as well as speech), understanding, vocabulary, grammar, and the frequency with which their child communicated.
3. **Parents were just as effective at helping their child as speech-language pathologists were.** In fact, parents were actually **more effective than speech-language pathologists** when working on improving the child's **understanding of language and grammar.**
4. **Children with a variety of language difficulties made good progress when their parents were trained to help them.** This includes children with Language Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Developmental Delay.

This confirms that parents should be partners with speech-language pathologists in the therapy process. Research shows that children with communication difficulties make the most progress when they receive early intervention that:

- provides effective training to parents, and
- is intensive so that every interaction with the child becomes an opportunity to build his or her language learning.



Professional intervention is crucial, but when you, as a parent, take control of your child's language development, you can extend that intervention into every part of your child's day, greatly increasing the chances for success.

**Joanne Duncum is a Hanen Certified Speech Language Pathologist.**

The Hanen Centre is a world-renowned leader in early childhood language development. Driven by the firm belief that parents *can and should be their child's most important language teachers*, Hanen has committed the last 35 years to developing research-based programs and resources specifically for parents of children from birth to five years of age.

As a Hanen Certified SLP, Joanne is licensed to deliver a Hanen program designed specifically for parents of young children (birth to 5 years of age) who have been identified as having a language delay. Joanne will be able to coach you, step-by-step, in becoming your child's most important language teacher. You will learn how to:

- Recognize your child's stage and style of communication so that you know which steps to take next
- Identify what motivates your child to interact with you so you'll know how to get conversations started
- Adjust everyday routines to help your child take turns and keep interactions going
- Follow your child's lead to build his/her confidence and encourage her/him to communicate
- Add language to interactions with your child to help him/her understand language and then use it when s/he is ready
- Tweak the way you play and read books with your child to help him/her learn language
- Change the way you speak to your child so that s/he'll understand and learn new words

Parents who have undertaken the program report that they are able to confidently use the concrete and practical strategies they have been taught to encourage their child's communication development, that they and their child have much more fun together than they did before, and that as a result there are significant improvements in their child's communication, interaction and play.

Talk to Joanne to find out if you and your child meet the criterion for the program.



Reference:

Roberts, M., & Kaiser, A. (2011). The Effectiveness of Parent-Implemented Language Intervention: A Meta-Analysis. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 20, 180-199.