



Count us in

Newsletter for the Down Syndrome Association of York Region

Volume 12

Summer 2003

Seventh Annual Track and Field Meet for Children with Special Needs



The York Region Elementary School Athletic Association along with the students of Stouffville High School organized a fabulous track meet for children with Special Needs. Events included 50m, 100m, and 200m events for slower runners, fast runners and wheel chair and walker participants, a precision ball toss, a distant ball toss and standing jump. All participants brought buddies to help cheer them on and all had a great day!



May 29th, 2003

President's Message

We have had an event filled spring. Our Networking and Speaker evening, on April 21st, was a wonderful success. Len Nicholson was an enthusiastic speaker with many great ideas on educating our children. (Please see the article on page 4 for more details) We are hoping Len will join us again in the fall for an evening workshop. The Tru-cash rewards program was also introduced that evening and rewards cards are currently being distributed. If you have not yet received your card, please contact us, and we will forward it to you. If you require extract cards, please let us know and they can also be provided. This is a fabulous fundraising program for the DSAYR. Thank you to Sandra Dutchek at Tru-cash for all of her hard work in launching the program.

By the time you are reading this newsletter our Annual family picnic will have taken place. I'm sure it will have been a great day at Camp Green Acres. (Look for pictures in our fall newsletter.)

We will be taking a bit of a break from our events over the summer. Our next event is DSAYR day at Wonderland September 21st, 2003. Last year was a great success and we are looking forward to another fabulous day at the park. A flyer, with details, will be mailed this summer.

As school winds down, our SEAC representatives (Tanya Magee – Public and Beverley Weick – Separate) are busying preparing for the fall session of school. If you have any questions or concerns about education,

IEP's, ISA funding or the IPRC process, please contact them through DSAYR@hotmail.com or 1-800-649-DOWN. Please remember, we also have a lot of valuable educational information available from our lending library. If you wish to purchase any of these books, most are available at Chapters or at www.Chapters.ca. We are currently compiling lists of resources and websites into a teachers package. This should be available to teachers and parents in the fall. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

We are currently seeking an Alternate SEAC representative for the Public School Board. If you are interested in special education and have some time to spare, this is an extremely rewarding volunteer position. Please contact the DSAYR by e-mail or telephone, if you would like more details.

We are still looking for your graduation pictures for our fall edition. Also, let us know what kept you busy over the summer; send us your vacation and camp stories and pictures. Please forward them to us via e-mail or regular mail. Let me know if you would like them returned. As always, I look forward to hearing from you! Deadline for submission for the fall newsletter is August 15th.



Have a safe and happy summer! I hope to see everyone at Wonderland in the fall.

DSAYR EXECUTIVE

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John Bryden
Vice-President

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(Vacant)
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Meeting Coordinator

Dawn Fawns
Phone Committee

Theresa Burfield
Director

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SEAC Public School Representative

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Medical Advisor to the Board

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Down Syndrome Association of York Region

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of parents, educators, and community support professionals who firmly believe in the inherent equality of persons with Down syndrome. We are committed to promoting a positive image of people with Down syndrome as being valued community members.

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome and provides a forum for others. The Down Syndrome Association of York Region (DSAYR) does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc. We will not espouse any particular political or religious view. Individuals or organizations referred to us do not necessarily endorse this publication or its editor. We wish to bring together those interested in Down syndrome and attempt to create an optimistic outlook and attitude. The editor reserves the right to make corrections to material submitted for publication.

Syntactic, Discourse and Reading Skills of Individuals with Down Syndrome

Would you like to participate?

We are conducting a study of language development in persons with Down Syndrome at the University of Toronto. We are interested in looking at the understanding of simple and complex sentences that are acquired at different times by children who do not have Down Syndrome. The goal of the research is to determine whether the understanding of complex sentences in children with Down Syndrome might be related to their reading ability. Results of the study have the potential to lead to intervention strategies that may enhance language and reading development in individuals with Down Syndrome.

We are currently looking for high functioning individuals with Down Syndrome who have a reading level of at least Grade 1. Participation involves acting out a series of sentences using props, as well as some standardized language tests. Assessments will be spread over three sessions of not more than 45 to 60

minutes per session and participants continue with the tests only as long as they wish. This project has been approved by the Ethics Review Unit at the University of Toronto, and no names or other identifying information will be associated with the responses of any individual. Previous participants have enjoyed taking part in this study.

If you would like more information or would like to participate please contact the principal researcher:

Alice Eriks-Brophy, Ph.D.
University of Toronto
Department of Speech-Language Pathology
Rehabilitation Sciences Building
500 University Avenue, 10th Floor
(416) 946-8633
a.eriks.brophy@utoronto.ca

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

MEANINGFUL EDUCATION For Children With Down Syndrome

The Down Syndrome Association of York Region was very proud to present an evening with guest speaker Len Nicholson. Len has spent 35 years as an educator in a variety of settings, and has, through his vast experience in programming for children with special needs, developed a unique philosophy of inclusion. As he spoke to the parents and teachers in attendance one could sense his tremendous respect for the children with whom he works. His pride in their accomplishments was touching. His expectations high. He challenged and inspired us to think carefully about what we expect for and from our children. He provided several suggestions for things our children should be learning, but, most importantly, told us specifically how this can be achieved (something which often gets left out of



professional advice...). The fact that discussion with Len continued informally for another ninety minutes, after his presentation had ended, clearly indicated that parents felt that what he had to say is what they needed to hear -- and was a sure sign that the DSAYR should invite Len to return!

The following are some of the key points of Len's message.

- ◆ Everything your child learns at school should be a direct step along the path toward becoming an independent adult who will one day move away (if he/she wants to) and be employed by someone who truly values your son/daughter's contribution. "Why are we doing this?" is the question which should guide every skill, concept and activity presented to your child. The answer must always be in

keeping with your vision of an independent adult, even when teaching the youngest of children.

- ◆ The main focus for the many years your child will spend in school should be on determining his/her strengths and interests so that, when it is time to leave the school system, you and your son/daughter will have a clear idea of the type of job he/she should be seeking.
- ◆ Accept the fact that your child's progress will be made in small steps, but expect that these new small steps will be made and reinforced each day. The new skill or concept learned should be recorded in the communication book so that it can be celebrated and reinforced again at home.
- ◆ Once reasonable, meaningful goals have been set it is important to do a task analysis in order to set specific objectives. This means breaking a task down into its smallest parts, so that all of the sub-skills can be taught and built on, step-by-step, until the final goal is achieved.
- ◆ Any new skill or concept taught must be immediately understood and found, by the child, to be useful. Behaviour problems arise when the child does not understand or see the relevance of what is being asked of him/her. Having to teach the same skill or concept over and over again with the hope that, in time, the child will understand, is an indication that the time is not right. Re-evaluate what is being asked of the child and teach the concept or skill that comes before.
- ◆ Children with special needs usually have to be directly taught things which other children seem to learn quite easily (eg. getting a spoon, napkin and container of yogurt at snacktime). Often the learning takes place more easily outside of the busy, distracting environment of the classroom. Once the skill is learned the child can then successfully apply it within the classroom setting.

continued...

◆ The adults in your child's life (teachers, educational assistants, parents) should be doing a lot of "arm folding." Provide only the minimum amount of assistance necessary. Teach the child to do it, then expect him or her to do it.

◆ Your child can and should be taught to be socially appropriate. Directly teaching your child the correct way to play with a specific toy or the proper rules for playing a certain game will allow him or her to confidently join other children at play in a way that makes him or her an enjoyable playmate.

◆ All children like the predictability of routine. Making a schedule which your child is able to read, made of tasks which your child is able to do (eg. get dressed, eat breakfast, brush your teeth) will allow him/her to do things independently while you are busy doing other things.

◆ Appropriate strategies for communication need to be developed, likely in conjunction with a Speech and Language Pathologist. These should be based on your child's ability to express him/herself verbally, as well as on his/her ability to interpret symbols, pictures and words.

◆ Your child should be learning functional academics at school. These are useful skills and concepts that will ultimately become job skills (eg. colour and shape recognition, number skills, sorting, matching, concepts of more/less, the ability to follow instructions). There are a

multitude of opportunities at school and at home when these can be taught and practised, usually without the aid of a workbook.

◆ Over time, remembering that progress is measured in small, slow steps, you will begin to see positive changes in your child. When your child feels that he/she is truly contributing



to the classroom and school community, behaviour problems may begin to decrease. Self-esteem and confidence will begin to grow as your child sees all that he/she can do independently. Your child will know the good feeling that comes with genuinely helping others, instead of always being the one being helped. Your child will be seen by others as someone who is capable of many things. Your child will feel that he/she belongs. Inclusion.

◆
Len Nicholson can be contacted at 416-969-9272
or at l.nicholson@sympatico.ca



DSAYR DAY at Canada's Wonderland

Sunday
September 21st, 2003



park passes will be \$20.00 • a barbeque lunch included
look for specific details and registration info in an upcoming flyer



Things To Do With Your Kids



*Make an "Idea Box" for times when your child says "I'm bored!". Start with a tissue or shoe box and let your child decorate it. When you come across an idea that strikes your fancy, write it on a slip of paper and place it in the box. Send them running to the idea box when they say they are bored. You can start by using some of the ideas listed here: *Decorate a small clay pot. Plant flower seeds, nurture and watch them grow *Cut paper dolls out of catalogues *Find a construction site and watch the trucks and tractors *Paint the fence or side of the house with a clean brush and a bucket of water *Paint a rock with tempura paint *Hide a kitchen timer and have your child search for it by listening for its ticking sound *Make your own puzzle by colouring a picture, gluing it to cardboard and cutting it into simple shapes *Print on paper by dipping the following objects in tempura paint; a potato cut in half with a design carved in the raw end; a cork; a bottle cap; or a spool *Fill a sink with soapy water, spoons, egg beaters, plastic dishes and a straw to occupy little ones while mom cooks *Glue yarn around a tin can and use it as a paint roller. This makes an interesting pattern for cards and wrapping paper *Make beanbags from scrap fabric to toss at a target *Make a fishing pole with a stick and string. Tie a magnet on the end and fish for paper clips *Use sidewalk chalk to draw a city complete with roads. Use toy cars and trucks on the roads *Play hopscotch *Make a sponge garden. Soak a sponge in water and place it in a shallow dish. Sprinkle with alfalfa or rye grass seeds. Keep it moist and watch it grow *Create a mosaic by cutting construction paper into zillions of small pieces and gluing them to a sheet of paper to create patterns or scenes *Make frozen fruit juice cubes in an ice tray *Spray paint two-litre bottles and use for bowling pins. (Put a little water in the bottom of each one to weigh it down.) *Make a bird feeder by rolling a pinecone in peanut butter, then in bird seed. Hang from a tree with string *Have your children create books about themselves. They might want to include their birth date, handprints and footprints, drawings of themselves and their families and a story about themselves. These are wonderful keepsakes *Take dressed-up stuffed animals and dolls on a wagon ride *Make place mats by covering kids' art work with clear contact paper *Decorate empty syrup bottles; tag with each child's name and use as water jugs in the refrigerator. Keep them on the bottom shelf so your children can get their own drinks *Cover the top of a shoe box with felt for a flannel board. Cut more coloured felt into various sizes and shapes, such as animals, cars, people, rectangles, squares, trees and triangles. Children can form objects and designs from the pieces. Store the pieces in the box. This is great for the car *Play a listening game. Ask your child to close his or her eyes and guess the sounds you make. Blow a whistle, drop a spoon, jingle money, snap your fingers or click your tongue *Read and act out one of your child's favourite stories *Make a mystery bag by placing familiar objects in a pillow case. Ask your child to close his or her eyes, feel the objects in the bag and pick out the item you name *Hide a small toy in a room. While the children look for it, give them clues such as, "You are hot" when they are close, and "You are cold" when they move away *Save and wash spray bottles and dishwashing liquid squirt bottles for water play *Be a limp rag doll. Lie on the floor and let your child move your arms and legs and roll you over. Then reverse roles and let him or her be the floppy doll *Put a sheet or blanket over a table and make a tent, doll house or secret hiding place. It's also a great place to take a nap or have a picnic lunch.

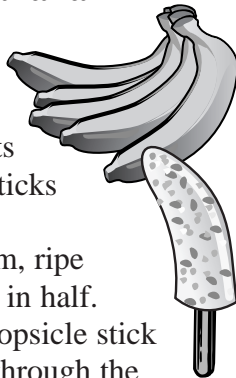
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Yummy Recipes!

Frozen Banana

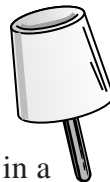
1 banana
honey
wheat germ
chopped nuts
2 popsicle sticks



Peel one firm, ripe banana. Cut in half. Insert one popsicle stick lengthwise through the center of each piece. Wrap in plastic and place in the freezer. When ready to eat, dip in honey and roll in toasted wheat germ or chopped nuts.

Yogurt Icicles

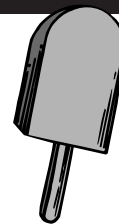
1 cup plain yogurt
3/4 cup frozen juice
(orange, grape or lemonade)
3/4 cup milk
6 - 8 paper cups
6 - 8 popsicle sticks



Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Mix well. Divide mixture evenly among popsicle moulds or paper cups. If you are using paper cups, freeze mixture until partially firm and insert a popsicle stick into center. Freeze until firm. To serve, peel off paper.

Fudge-sicles

1/2 cup sugar
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
3 Tablespoons cocoa
2 1/2 cups milk



Combine all ingredients in heavy saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally until thickened. Add: 1 teaspoon vanilla
1 Tablespoon butter
Mix well. Divide mixture evenly among popsicle moulds or paper cups. If you are using paper cups, freeze mixture until partially firm and insert a popsicle stick into center. Freeze until firm. To serve, peel off paper.

Looking for information on Speech and Language Pathologists? Try these Internet sites

Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
www.caslpa.ca

The Ontario Association of Speech – Language Pathologists and Audiologists
www.osla.on.ca

For Private Practice Referrals, please call: 416-920-0361 or 1-877-740-6009 between 2:00-3:30 PM Monday-Friday.

The Hanen Centre
(416) 921-1073
www.hanen.org

Beyond Words – York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program
www.beyond-words.org



Paramount Canada's Wonderland	905-832-8131	www.canadas-wonderland.com
Ontario Place	416-314-9900	www.ontarioplace.com
Science North	1-800-461-4898	www.sciencenorth.on.ca
Ontario Science Centre	416-696-1000	www.ontariosciencecentre.ca
Toronto Zoo	416-392-5900	www.torontozoo.com
Centreville	416-203-0405	www.centreisland.ca
Marineland	905-356-9565	www.marinelandcanada.com
Forsythe Family Farms	905-887-1087	www.forsythefamilyfarms.com

For many more ideas for summer outings visit www.yorktourism.com

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The Up Side of Down Playgroup and Parent Support Group

The Up Side of Down Playgroup and Parent Support Group began in the autumn of 1999 to address a need expressed by families in the Newmarket area with young children with Down syndrome. Families wanted an avenue to meet other families in the Newmarket area who also had children with this diagnosis. Feedback from families often included this statement; "We would like to meet other families in the same situation as us." "I find it difficult to pick up the phone and call another family and tell them my story." "I cannot pick up the phone, say Hi I'm _____ and have a son/daughter with Down syndrome." From these comments and others that were shared on home visits, Elaine Maynard-Lloyd, Early Interventionist and Sandra Welsman, Physiotherapist along with the support of our Supervisor, Linda Leveiller-Wheeler developed the first Up Side of Down Playgroup for nine families. Currently thirteen families now participate.

Many of these families are currently in the transition to school process. The four youngest children, all of which are girls, meet weekly with the parents in the Newmarket EIS office. Everyone comes together once every three months for an evening playgroup, bedtime snack and story at the York-North Ontario Early Years site in Newmarket. Gwen Berry, Manager of the York North Ontario Early Years Site, is most supportive of us using this space to meet.

We continue to share good times and sad times, life experiences, the health and wellness of our children, hospitalizations, birthday celebrations and the birth of a new baby. The Up Side of Down Playgroup and Parent Support Group has built friendships and support that will continue to grow and nurture current and new families to come.

Elaine Maynard-Lloyd
Early Interventionist
Early Intervention Services of York Region



Ontario Early Years

An Ontario Early Years Centre is a place for parents and caregivers of children up to the age of six to go and get information they need about their child's development and about services to support that development.

Every Ontario Early Years Centre offers programs which are free to all parents and caregivers of young children. Services include;

- Early learning and literacy programs for parents and their children
- Programs to support parents and caregivers in all aspects of early childhood development.

- Programs on pregnancy and parenting.
- Links to other early years programs in the community.

Locations within York Region

- Ontario Early Years Centre – Oak Ridges
- Ontario Early Years Centre – Thornhill
- Ontario Early Years Centre – Vaughan-King-Aurora
- Ontario Early Years Centre – York North
- Ontario Early Years Centre – Markham

Visit the Ontario Early Years web page: ontarioearlyyears.ca for more information about locations and programs in your neighbourhood.

EARN TRUCASH POINTS ALL SUMMER LONG!

Keep your DSAYR TruCa\$h Rewards Card close at hand, whether your summer plans are keeping you close to home or you are traveling across the country.

Your DSAYR membership card allows you to save a lot plus give a lot back to your organization. Each time you use your card with TruCa\$h's retail, gift certificate and internet partners, you receive preferred services and points. Half of your points are donated to DSAYR. The rest are for you to use as you wish.



Only available by calling 1-866-456-2466. Escape to AMC Theatre during the next heat wave. Receive preferred rates plus earn 510 TruCa\$h points per ticket.



Only available by calling 1-866-456-2466. Freshen up your house with the latest home fashions. Order gift certificates for HomeSense, Crabtree & Evelyn and Linens N' Things.



One call does it all! Preferred rates plus points on hotel bookings and car rentals across North America. **Visit www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com or call 1-866-456-2466** and let TruCa\$h find the best rates and book your next reservations.



Call TruCa\$h Hotel and Car Rental Program at **1-866-456-2466** or visit **www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com** and receive double points on your hotel stay with the purchase of Travel Guard insurance. Complete coverage and flexibility at very competitive prices for residents of Canada and visitors to Canada.



Unbelievably low long distance cellular rates of only 6.9¢ per minute¹. Call anywhere in Canada and the U.S. Toll-free and home long distance services available at the same low 6.9¢ per minute rate. **Visit www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com or call 1-866-462-3626** for further details.



Only available by calling 1-866-456-2466. Brand name and designer fashions plus 70 TruCa\$h points with every \$10 gift certificate at Winners.



Only available by calling 1-866-456-2466. Reward yourself when you eat out! Order gift certificates for your favourite restaurants and Irish pubs. Check out our complete list at www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com.

Visit www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com or call 1-866-456-2466 for more points earning opportunities.

Find out about the latest Partners, special offers and exciting enhancements to the Down Syndrome Association TruCa\$h Rewards program. Provide TruCa\$h Rewards with your email address by visiting www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com and creating your profile. We will credit your account with 300 TruCa\$h points.

Redeem your points for cash, donate more points to DSAYR, treat yourself to a movie at Famous Players or choose from lots of other great rewards. Visit www.dsayr.trucashrewards.com and click on "account" to see your current points balance and to redeem your points. You can also call our Customer Service Centre at 1-866-456-2466 or 905-212-9100.

¹Over and above your actual cellular program's rates.

Dear Mom and Dad, We need you too...

When one of the children in a family has special needs it is natural and necessary that a lot of time and energy be directed toward that child. It is important to remember, however, that the other children in the family need you just as much. Following are some suggestions for maintaining balance within your family, written from a sibling's point of view.

- 1. Be open and honest.** Accept the fact that my brother or sister has special needs and know that I will, too. What is the name of the condition that is affecting my brother or sister? Tell me what you know about it in a way that I can understand. Explain how all of the various specialists (physiotherapists, speech and language pathologists, etc.) are involved. Answer my questions as best you can, or help me find the answers.
- 2. Value each of us individually.** Don't compare our strengths and weaknesses. Remind all of your children of their unique qualities and praise us all for our contributions to the family.
- 3. Listen to me.** When my words or actions are telling you that something is bothering me please ask me about it. It may or may not have anything to do with my brother or sister, but at least I'll know that you still see me.
- 3. Don't give me too many caregiving responsibilities.** Remember that I am a child, too. It is important for me to have fun with my brother or sister and relate to him or her in that way, not as an extra parent. Maybe there are other support services that can offer you the caregiving help you need.
- 4. Be fair.** My brother or sister should be treated as normally as possible, with no excuses made or special privileges given just because he or she has special needs. My brother or sister should be expected to do as much for him or herself as possible, instead of relying on me to do it for him or her. My brother or sister can help with household chores. When we know we've done something wrong we all need a consequence -- and plenty of praise, recognition and reward when we've done something right!
- 5. Schedule special time with me.** I know that my brother or sister needs extra time and attention, but I

need you to notice me, too. Spending some time alone with you would mean a lot, even if its just running errands or going to the park.

- 6. Let us settle our own differences.** Don't expect me to have endless patience, understanding and tolerance. All brothers and sisters argue. In this way we are just like every other family. Working out conflicts ourselves helps us get to know each other and to learn how to compromise and co-operate.
- 7. Put me in touch with other children who have a sibling with special needs.** I know they will understand exactly what it's like for me. [SibKids and SibNet -- www.chmc.org/departmt/sibsupp]. Most of the time this isn't necessary, but if it is, get me some professional help in handling my feelings.
- 8. Be part of the community.** Sign us up for activities we are interested in. Welcome friends and family to our home. Take us to visit them. It's good for everyone to talk, laugh, cry and eat together! Our family needs the support of people we love. Being with our family makes them feel good, too.
- 9. Recognize that we are mostly just like other families.** All families have difficulties that they must deal with; it's just sometimes not as obvious as with our family. All families have joyful moments, and we have lots of those, too. Having a child with special needs is one of the things about our family -- it's not the only thing.

Resources:

Brothers and Sisters -- A Special Part of Exceptional Families

by Thomas H. Powell and Peggy Ahrenhold Ogle

Sibshops: Workshops for Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs

by Donald Meyer and Patricia F. Vadasy

Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs -- A book for Sibs

by Donald Meyer and Patricia F. Vadasy

Views From Our Shoes

by Donald Meyer

It Isn't Fair

by S. Klein and M. Schleifer



Happy Birthday!



Adam Brookes

May 2nd, 18th birthday

Ruby Lappin

June 5th, 6th birthday

Julian Pasquariello

June 8th, 18th birthday

Carlie Bo Pulla-Chin

June 10th, 5th birthday

Katie Veitch

June 14th, 5th birthday

Darryl Dickson

June 26th, 22nd birthday

Hien Sa

June 27th, 39th birthday

Kyla Anne Davis

July 10th, 9th birthday

Kirstin Shepherd

July 15th, 1st birthday

Isabelle Berthelot

July 18th, 2nd birthday

Aimee Goudie

July 31st, 17th birthday

Meredith Allen

August 1st, 13th birthday

Frankie Dejak

August 1st, 27th birthday

Jeffrey Vanier

August 2nd, 16th birthday

Julian Teofilo

August 5th, 12th birthday

Eric Dovgala-Froese

August 9th, 10th birthday

Blake Hayden

August 11th, 13th birthday

Rachel Colangelo

August 12th, 17th birthday

Marco Manno

August 14th, 16th birthday

Vivian Chan

August 15th, 14th birthday

Lee McConnell

August 18th, 8th birthday

Ryan MacMillan

August 21st, 10th birthday

Mackenzie Copping

August 22nd, 4th birthday

Evan Fawns

August 25th, 16th birthday

Protecting Your Family in the Summer

Your kids love summer! They don't have to go to school, they can stay up late and best of all – they have all day to play. Follow the safety tips below to make sure their summer memories are safe ones.

Ride Safe!

- Make sure your kids are secured in the appropriate child safety seat or safety belt for their age and size.
- Kids should always be secured in the back seat.
- Study both your vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat instructions carefully.

Swim Safe!

- Always supervise young children near water, including pools, spas, toilets, bathtubs and buckets.
- Insist your children wear personal flotation devices when out on boats, near open bodies of water or participating in water sports.

Wheel Safe!

- Make sure your kids wear properly fitting helmets and other protective gear every time they ride their bikes, scooters, inline skates or skateboards.
- Teach your children the rules of the road and practice obeying traffic laws with them.

Walk Safe!

- Never let your child under age 10 cross the street alone. Teach children to obey traffic rules.
- Make sure your kids wear retroreflective materials, and don't let them walk alone at night. If they must walk at dawn or at dusk, make sure they carry a flashlight.

Play Safe!

- Always supervise your children at playgrounds or in the backyard. Make sure they play on a safe surface, such as mulch, rubber or fine sand.
- Make sure your kids wear the right, properly fitted protective gear when they practice and play team sports!

For more information visit the Safe Kids web site at www.safekids.org

On May 22, 23 and 24 Adam Brookes had the opportunity to play in the Provincial Floor Hockey Championships in Ottawa. His team the Newmarket Ringers played 4 exciting games of hockey and proudly won silver in their "C" division. The weekend was very special for Adam as he traveled with the team and stayed in the "Olympic Village" with over 300 other participants. For the parents (& Grandparents) the venue was fantastic, they offered us all the hospitality one could ask for from food to tours of Ottawa (Casino) and the best floor hockey one could watch! Congatulations to Adam, his teammates and coaches for being part of a winning team.



Report on Advanced Analysis on Legal Issues in Special Education

By: Tanya Magee

On March 31, 2003 I had the pleasure of attending this particular professional development program facilitated by Osgoode Hall Law School. Through this program I was able to participate in numerous sessions in which various lawyers presented information and case studies around special education and the law.

I will provide a brief synopsis of the sessions and my interpretation of what is happening regarding special education and the law. I am not a lawyer and have no knowledge in this area and my interest exists because I have a child who has Down syndrome who attends public school. As your representative on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) at York Region District School Board (YRDSB) I was honored to attend on behalf of the Down Syndrome Association of York Region.

The first speaker Paul Howard addressed equity rights legislation in special education. In the late 1980's parents began to utilize human rights legislation in order to advocate for their children in special education. To prove that violations to human rights are occurring you must prove that discrimination exists. As you can well imagine this becomes a complicated process of legal challenges where the

student's specific needs get forgotten because school boards try to prove that the accommodations that the student requires causes undue financial hardship and cannot be facilitated and parents are trying to advocate for the best interest of their child.

In the end we all have to assess what is the best way to achieve a positive outcome for the student. At all times we must remember to stay focused on the student. School boards need to be consistent and fair and offer the parents opportunities to participate. Parents need to remain calm and ensure they follow all the steps in place to advocate for their child. The challenge is to settle these disagreements by providing opportunities for good communication between the parties involved and mediate situations before they reach the judicial level.

Catherine Peters was the second speaker of the conference. Her presentation reviewed the IPRC process and will not be reviewed as much of it was addressed in the previous newsletter.

In the third presentation Miller Thompson presented an overview of the impact of the Safe Schools Act from the perspective of Schools and Boards. I believe the legislation can unwittingly limit

the ability of schools and boards to influence exceptional pupils and sometimes provides a framework that can keep exceptional pupils out of the classroom. At SEAC we recently reviewed the statistics on suspensions/expulsion in special education and it is something that the York Region District Public School Board is committed to tracking and addressing if necessary.

Cheryl Milne responded by focusing on the students perspective of the Safe Schools Act. Her position was that suspension/expulsion is being used as a form of punishment. She questioned whether or not this is effective. It was also noted that we must balance the rights of the child with the responsibilities of the adults. As adults we need to insure our children are supported. We need to evaluate what supports/accommodations were in place when the breach took place and if the lack of proper support is leaving those with exceptionalities at risk. It is my belief that as we whittle away the opportunities for special education students to be successful in the classroom we are providing an environment for increased negative behavior associated with increased feelings of frustration and low self esteem.

The fifth presentation reviewed the human resource issues around

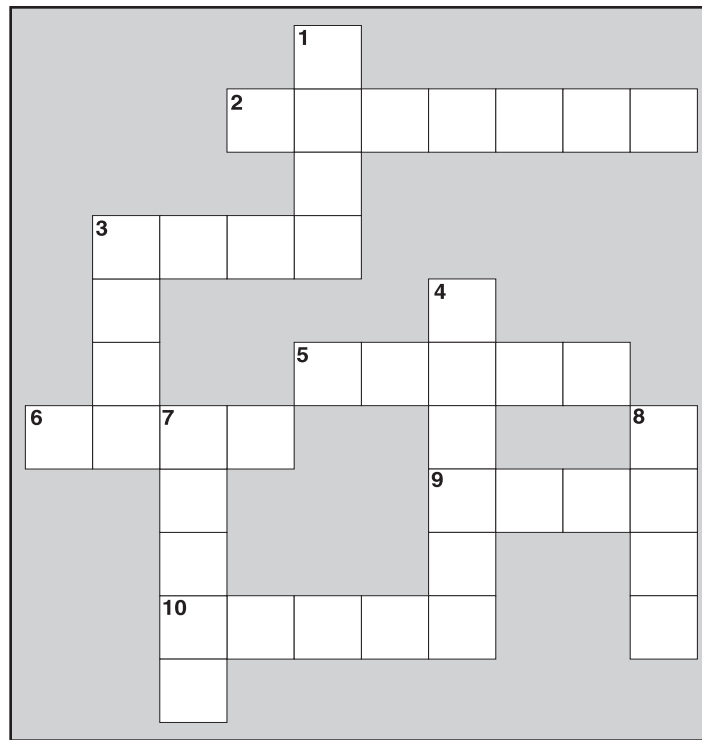
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work refusal and parental involvement. In this session Robert G. Keel the facilitator of the workshop reviewed case studies around teachers/ teacher's assistant's refusal to work with particular students for a variety of reasons. There are laws that support this right under the Canada Labour Code and Occupational Health and Safety and each case needs to be addressed individually

The final presentation focused on the administration of medication where we learned about some of the Acts and laws that have been created to protect the student and the school board.

Overall this was an information gathering experience. As a parent I was one of the few non professional people attending the conference. I was able to gain some insight and knowledge around some of the legal issues in special education that affect students with Down syndrome. It was also provided confirmation that there are two perspectives to every story and we all have important roles to play in ensuring that those around us with exceptionalities reach their potential.

It has also helped me appreciate the hard work and commitment of many dedicated individuals in homes, schools, school boards, and community associations such as the Down syndrome Association of York Region. I am privileged to be a part of this community.



book
chest
head
knee
neck
rocking
shirt
shoe
slide
sock
tickle

Across

- 2 move back and forth (CC)
3 a soft covering for your foot (HH)
5 clothing for the upper part of your body (JJ)
6 use this to turn your head (BB)
9 part of your leg that bends (AA)
10 find this at a playground (DD)

Down

- 1 a collection of printed pages (KK)
3 put your sock on then put on your _____ (II)
4 you laugh when this is done (EE)
7 part of the body below the neck and above the stomach (GG)
8 where you do your thinking (FF)

Additional Clues

- (AA) rhymes with key, starts with k
(BB) part of your body between your head and shoulders, starts with n
(CC) _____ chair, starts with r
(DD) climb up to go down this, starts with s
(EE) rhymes with pickle, starts with t
(FF) where you find your nose & ears & hair, starts with h
(GG) where your ribs and lungs are, starts with c
(HH) put your _____ on and then put on your shoe, starts with s
(II) the outer covering for your foot, starts with s
(JJ) this is clothing with short or long sleeves, starts with s
(KK) something you read, starts with b

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Down Syndrome Association of York Region
2003 Membership Application Form
(Charitable #89156 0971 RR0001)

In order to continue to share valuable and informative material with all our members, it is vital that we maintain up-to-date and accurate information. Your \$25.00 membership includes our quarterly newsletters, "Count Us In," social functions, regular Association meetings with guest speakers and access to our lending library.

- YES**, please sign me up for a membership in the Down Syndrome Association of York Region. \$ 25.00
- YES**, I would like to make a donation to the Association. \$ _____
Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or more. Total _____

Please complete the information below:

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: () _____ E-mail: _____

My child has Down syndrome. His/her name is: _____

My child's birthdate is: Year: _____ Month: _____ Day: _____

I agree to having their name published in the Association's newsletters: Yes No

Please check all the answers that apply.

- I am an individual with Down syndrome
 a parent/guardian of an individual with Down syndrome
 a medical professional

Please detach and mail with your cheque payable to **The Down Syndrome Association of York Region**
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