



Moving on to School

Communication, Language & Speech Services Upper Grand District School Board

Transitioning to Kindergarten

As you prepare for your child to enter kindergarten, you may have concerns regarding their communication skills and how speech and language support is provided within the school setting. At the Upper Grand District School Board, speech-language pathologists work closely with kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators to support the development of oral language, social skills and early literacy for all students. When students in the early years struggle, the team works together to gather more information and tailor programming to build students' ability to speak, listen, read and write.

Full Day Kindergarten:

Your child will enter kindergarten with skills and experiences that may be different from their classmates. Despite any differences between children, all children will continue to grow and develop during the kindergarten years. Full Day Kindergarten within UGDSB is designed to support skill development, including communication skills, through inquiry and play-based learning.

Within the **Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)** program, UGDSB speech-language pathologists:

- support teachers in learning about typical development in the areas of oral language (such as vocabulary, conversation and storytelling), literacy (including phonological awareness) and play. This may be offered through educator consultations and/or professional development opportunities.
- assess communication disorders by evaluating language, speech, voice, pre-literacy, stuttering, social communication and play skills, as well as nonverbal communication and use of augmentative communication devices.
- provide a variety of in-class or out-of-class supports for students with language disorders, including students who are non-verbal.



- participate on interdisciplinary teams that support students who struggle to regulate their bodies and express themselves in ways other than behaviour.
- share information and strategies with teachers and parents about the impact of communication disorders on students' experiences making friends and learning in school.
- collaborate with educators and school personnel to develop programming for children who have lagging skills in the area of communication.
- evaluate eligibility for and complete referrals to School Based Rehabilitation Services for students with articulation, voice or stuttering difficulties.

Accessing Services

- Your child may have participated in **Preschool Speech and Language Services** through **KidsAbility (Guelph/Wellington)** or **ErinoakKids (Dufferin)**. If so, you will be asked by the preschool speech-language pathologist to allow them to share your child's discharge report with the school and the school speech-language pathologist. The school speech-language pathologist sends a copy of the discharge report to the school, for filing in your child's Ontario Student Record. The report makes the school speech-language pathologist and classroom teacher aware of your child's communication skills prior to entering JK. If additional information about speech and language is needed to support programming, the classroom teacher will ask your permission to talk to the school speech-language pathologist.
- When a student has complex communication needs, more information is needed in order to support a successful transition to school. The school's speech-language pathologist participates in a "Transition to School" meeting where parents and community partners meet and review a shared document describing the student's strengths and needs. This typically occurs in the spring before the start of JK. The school speech-language pathologist will share how a student may be supported based on information gathered at the meeting.
- Many students come to school without having received preschool speech and language services. If your child is difficult to understand, is non-verbal or speaks using single words or short utterances, and the teacher does not see a discharge report from a preschool speech-language pathologist, they will contact you to get permission to speak to the school speech-language pathologist about their concern.

- In SK, if your child’s teacher is concerned about your child’s language skills, they will contact you about referring your child to the school speech-language pathologist for a Kindergarten Communication Skills Evaluation (KCSE). This evaluation provides information about students’ communication skills to determine if additional small-group language support is needed.

Eligibility for Services:

- Students in JK and SK, who are not verbal and/or have complex communication needs, are supported by the school speech-language pathologist and school team.
- Students in JK and SK, who present with moderate to severe articulation difficulties, voice concerns or stuttering will be evaluated and referred to School Based Rehabilitation Services (SBRS) provided by KidsAbility (Guelph/Wellington) or ErinoakKids (Dufferin) Children's Treatment Centres. Referral criteria for SBRS are determined by the regional Children's Treatment Centres. Students will be seen for speech therapy according to their placement on the SBRS waitlist.
- Students in JK and SK with a language disorder associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder may be eligible for an After-School Skills Development Program targeting social communication difficulties when such a program is available.
- Students in SK seen for a Kindergarten Communication Skills Evaluation and meet the criteria for a Language Disorder of at least moderate severity are eligible for small group language intervention.

Additional Supports

What else is available if my child is not eligible for Communication, Language and Speech Services at School?

- If your child’s communication difficulties are mild, and they are not eligible for services, you will be given information about S-LPs in your area who provide private practice for a fee. Check with your extended health care benefits to see if the cost of these services are covered.

- You can contact the **Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists** at www.osla.on.ca or the **College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario** at www.caslpo.com for additional information.
- **Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD)** at [www.http://oafccd.com/](http://www.oafccd.com/) The Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) is a network of parents, caregivers and professionals including Speech Language Pathologists. OAFCCD works with families and individuals to provide support and ensure children and youth have access to effective speech and language services.

I need more information

If you need additional information about supporting your child as they enter school you can contact:

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