

CASLPA Members Help Children Cultivate Speech, Language and Hearing Skills

November 20 is National Child's Day

The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) believes every child deserves the right to communication. This year's theme for National Child's Day is *The Right to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health*. In recognition of this day, CASLPA highlights the vital role speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel play in the early detection and intervention of speech, language and hearing disorders in infants and children.

Does your six-month-old make sounds back when you talk? Does your one-year-old look at your face when talking to you? Does your two-year-old take turns in a conversation? If you answered no to one of these examples of communication questions, your child may have a speech, language or hearing disorder.

A child's ability to communicate effectively is vital to social and academic skill development. The first few years of life are particularly critical to mastering the first building blocks of learning. Early identification and intervention for children with speech, language and/or hearing disorders will ensure they have the best possible help during critical years of their intellectual, social and communication development.

"The longer it takes to identify and treat a speech or language disorder, the more limited the effectiveness of treatment may be," says Carla Di Gironimo, director of speech-language pathology and standards with CASLPA. "Later in childhood and into adolescence, problems may not be as easily treated and may even hinder or complicate other skills regarding social, academic or cognitive development. If parents suspect their child has a speech or language problem, they should contact a speech-language pathologist or if they suspect a hearing problem, contact an audiologist."

Universal newborn hearing screening (UNHS) is the first step in the process to improve development in children with hearing loss. UNHS leads to early identification, which then leads to improved hearing and facilitates communication development.

UNHS is increasingly becoming the standard of care in many developed countries, including the United States, where 95 per cent of newborns are screened with UNHS programs. Not all newborns in Canada are screened and that's why CASLPA has launched a UNHS campaign. For more information, visit the [UNHS page](#) on CASLPA's website and join the [UNHS Facebook group](#).

If you or someone you know has a suspected communication disorder, CASLPA recommends contacting a speech-language pathologist or audiologist. CASLPA represents the professional needs of more than 5,500 speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel within one organization. For more information about the role these professionals play in the management of communication disorders or to find one in your area, visit CASLPA's website at www.speechandhearing.ca.

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**For more information, please contact:
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