



Parent Orientation Guide

Speech Services Niagara

Niagara Children's Centre

Niagara Health System

Community Satellite offices



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Family Centred Care
- Privacy and Consent Policy
- Client Rights and Responsibilities
- Complaints and Compliments
- Policies and Procedures
- Your Child's Health and Safety
- Services available at Niagara Children's Centre
- Other Important Information

Introduction to Speech Services Niagara

Mission

Speech Services Niagara is a regional team of speech, language and literacy professionals committed to providing optimal services to our clients and the community through planning, coordinating and providing a comprehensive range of services based on identification of need. We promote awareness of speech language and emergent literacy development within our communities and provide leading edge expertise in the practice of speech, language and emergent literacy services to ensure that every preschool age child who requires speech and language services receives timely, quality services in order to maximize their ability to be successful as a communicative member of our community.

Vision

Speech Services Niagara is a recognized system of excellence in preschool speech, language and literacy services, providing innovative quality programs focused on early identification, education, and intervention. This enables children with speech and language disorders to develop the communication skills needed to maximize their ability to learn and be successful in our community.

Speech Services Niagara also follows the vision of the lead agency which is

“Special needs children at their best”

Additional Aspects of the Vision Statement:

- We maintain a high standard of quality programming in the areas of speech, language and literacy services for the benefit of not only children with identified delays but for healthy promotion of communication and literacy for all children in Niagara
- We are recognized by the community as a critical player in the promotion and acquisition of literacy skills for children in Niagara
- The community recognizes the importance of early identification for literacy and language which leads to early intervention and reasonable waiting lists
- Few children are entering school with communication and literacy needs because of early identification and intervention

- There is smooth uncomplicated transition/integration from SSN to school services in a partner oriented system where our input is valued and meaningful.

Values

Our core values are:

Innovation

We actively seek and encourage new ideas, imaginative initiative, creative solutions and carefully planned risk in which we learn from our success and failures.

Respect

We work with integrity (i.e., moral uprightness, incorporating honesty, respect for yourself and compassion for all). As team members, we follow this axiom by treating others in the same manner you would like to be treated.

Accountability

We demonstrate our commitment to accountability by establishing Standards of Practice including all aspects of service delivery. We will maintain our competence by ensuring a current and broad scope of knowledge in the field of pediatric communication disorders. We routinely review, evaluate and make public our performance and seek continuous strives toward the provision of the best standards of care.



Speech Services Niagara also complies with the mission vision and values of the Niagara Children's Centre, our lead agency- www.niagarachildrenscentre.com

FAMILY CENTRED CARE



What is Family Centred Care?

Family Centred Care is a philosophy of care that has been adopted by Niagara Children's Centre. It emphasizes the partnership of children, families and the staff of Niagara Children's Centre to work together in the best interest of children and their families to achieve overall health, quality of life and the ability to participate in home and community life. By sharing desires and goals, children and families and Niagara Children's Centre staff work towards attaining those goals with the resources each brings.

It is recognized that in order to be good team members, we all need information both now and on an on-going basis. Staff members receive intensive on-going education about the Family-Centred Care model and implement the clinical requirements of the model on a daily basis. As a parent, and a team member, your understanding of the model and participation on the team is equally as important.

As the most important member of your child's team, we want you to know that....

You and your child are actively included in the delivery of service from initial contact, through assessment, goal planning, treatment programming, service transitions and discharge.

Your team members are dedicated and prepared to help you throughout your involvement with your child and Niagara Children's Centre.

Your team members will help you advocate for your child and the services your family needs. As a member of the team you will be encouraged to:

- Express your concerns, visions and specific goals for your child
- Share information and help make decisions about your child's services
- Understand your child's development and progress
- Understand the services your child and family are receiving
- Ask questions about your child's service
- Ask questions about other services and resources that are available at the Centre and in the Community
- Work together with team members in an atmosphere of mutual respect

Speech Services Niagara's Parent Guide to Privacy and Consent

Speech Services Niagara is a partnership program between Niagara Children's Centre and the Niagara Health System. Speech Language Pathologists from both agencies work together in a seamless system to best meet the needs of your child. Whether your child is seen by a therapist from Niagara Children's Centre or the Niagara Health System, it is important that personal health information about your child and family be collected and protected. The personal health information that we collect may include, for example, name, date of birth, address, health history records of visits and information about the care you and your child have received during those visits. When necessary for the purposes of care, we collect personal health information from other sources if we have obtained consent or, if the law permits. Niagara Children's Centre is the lead agency for Speech Services Niagara. If you are seen by an employee of that agency, your personal health information will be contained within an electronic system. We limit collection of information to what is required to provide care to you and your family. If services are provided by a Speech Language Pathologist from the Niagara Health System, or at one of the satellite locations in Welland or Niagara Falls by a Niagara Children's Centre employee, then your information will be transferred to that hospital and continued to be stored there. What ever information has already been entered into the electronic system at Niagara Children's Centre, will remain at Niagara Children's Centre with copies going to the new site at time of transfer in order to continue your services.

Use and Disclosure of personal Health Information

At Niagara Children's Centre, information is shared with your consent by only those professionals and organizations serving your child and family and through verbal and written communication and in an electronic record. We may use the information to:

- Treat and care for children and families
- Plan, administer and manage our program
- Conduct risk management activities
- Conduct quality improvement activities, such as sending satisfaction surveys
- Teach
- Conduct research
- Compile statistics
- Fundraise to improve our health care services and program
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements
- Fulfill other purposes permitted or required by law

Your Right to Privacy

Privacy legislation protects your right to:

- Consent to how your information will be used and shared. Since your child's team could include service providers and professionals from education, or community services, the Children's Centre requires you to give expressed consent for these community partners to share information. In order for your consent to be valid, you must be given sufficient information for your consent to be knowledgeable. We encourage you to ask any questions you need to so that you understand how your providers will use and protect your information.
- Withhold or withdraw consent for information sharing except in specific circumstances where disclosure is legally required under the Child and Family Services Act
- Provide consent verbally

- Request access to your child's or your electronic record
- Request that a correction be made to your record

Your Choices

When you come to one of our satellites for services with a child, we function under your implied consent for initiation of assessment and treatment. You have the right to withdraw from services at anytime. Parent/caregivers receiving services from Niagara Children's Centre may access and make corrections to their children's personal health records or withdraw consent for some of the above uses and disclosures of information by contacting their therapist or their manager and filling out the appropriate form. Information on how to make change will be provided upon request. You will receive a response from the Children's Centre Health Records committee within 5 working days to let you know if the correction is granted. Please note that there are legal exceptions.

Important Information

We take steps to protect your personal health information from theft, loss and unauthorized access, copying, modification, use, disclosure and disposal.

- We conduct audits and complete investigations to monitor and manage our privacy compliance.
- We take steps to ensure that everyone who performs services for us protect your privacy and only use your personal health information for the purposes you have consented to.

For more information about the privacy protection practices at Niagara Children's Centre or to raise a concern you have with our practices, contact:

Dorothy Harvey, Privacy Officer, Niagara Children's Centre

905-688-1890 ext. 200 or privacy@niagarachildrenscentre.com (do not send personal information)

For all other questions regarding your experiences with Speech Services Niagara contact the SSN Manager, Jackie Van Lankveld at jvan@niagarachildrenscentre.com or 905-688-1890 ext. 158.

If you need more information on your privacy rights or you are unable to resolve a privacy problem with us directly, you may contact the Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner at:

Telephone (416) 326-3333 or 1-800-387-3333 FAX (416) 325-9195 or www.ipc.on.ca

Speech Services Niagara clients being served by **Niagara Health System staff** can access the hospital's privacy policy on line at <http://www.niagarahealth.on.ca/about/privacy>

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Niagara Children's Centre is committed to providing children and families with a positive service experience and an environment where expectations are clearly communicated. This statement was developed to support our commitment and to ensure that all clients* have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

While involved with the Children's Centre you have the right to:

- receive quality care and service, in a clean and safe environment
- be involved in decision making regarding your child
- receive information and answers to your questions about our services, your child and your child's individual service plan
- give or refuse consent to any proposed care and to be advised of the risks and benefits of the therapy being proposed
- be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect
- privacy and confidentiality of your health information and record of care
- have your language, culture, religion and sexual orientation respected
- receive care in an environment free from abuse, exploitation, retaliation
- have your questions and concerns, heard without fear of reprisal, and to expect the Centre staff to provide a timely response to your concerns
- be informed of any unanticipated service reductions and contingency plans related to your child's service

You have the responsibility to:

- provide accurate information relating your child's developmental, medical and personal history including their legal/custody status
- provide information on any other services (including private) your child may be involved in
- be actively involved in developing goals and the plan of care for your child and family
- be actively involved in treatment sessions and carrying through with home programming
- ask questions when you don't understand or when you require more information
- accept the consequences should you refuse treatment or not follow the treatment plan
- be courteous and respectful of other clients and staff
- notify the Centre in advance if you are unable to attend your appointment
- Keep your child home if they are ill
- Ensure the safety and supervision of your child when on Centre premises
- Ensure the security of your personal property
- Call your therapist before leaving in bad weather to ensure your site is open for business

COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS

Information about Our Complaints and Compliments Process

Niagara Children's Centre is committed to providing you quality care and service, based on a family-centred care philosophy. Our Centre's values are:

- Respect underlies all we do
- Excellence and innovation are the cornerstone of our achievement
- Children and Families come first
- Teamwork and partnerships are vital

If you have any concerns about your services or if you feel that your rights have not been met, we encourage you to first discuss your concern with your child's therapist or the person involved. If the result is not to your satisfaction, you may direct your concern, verbally or in writing to the manager of your child's service. If satisfactory resolution is not achieved within 10 business days, your concern may be directed to the Centre's Chief Executive Officer.

We also welcome any compliments. If you would like to recognize an employee, team or the Centre, please notify the respective Manager.

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Manager, Rehabilitation Services	Dorothy Harvey	905 688 1890 ext 200	dorothy.harvey@niagarachildrenscentre.com
Manager, Speech Services Niagara	Jackie Van Lankveld	905 688 1890 ext 158	jackie.vanlankveld@niagarachildrenscentre.com
Manager, Corporate Services	Jean Byrnes	905 688 1890 ext 103	jean.byrnes@niagarachildrenscentre.com
Chief Executive Officer	Oksana Fisher	905 688 1890 ext 102	oksana.fisher@niagarachildrenscentre.com



Speech Services Niagara Policies and Procedures

Speech Services Niagara (SSN) is a regional system. It has different satellite sites throughout the Niagara Region. All sites follow the same policies and procedures and have similar wait times for assessment/treatment.

The **aim** of SSN is to assess your child and determine the need and model of treatment based on specific criteria and your family's needs. The **goal** of our service is to provide you/caregivers with the strategies and information to improve your child's speech and language skills through observation of therapy techniques, home work, and education. Caregiver commitment is crucial to the success of attaining a child's goals. **As a result, parents/caregivers must remain with their child during treatment sessions at all times. If you are sending someone else in your place please inform us in advance.**

Attendance

A strong commitment to attend each scheduled appointment is necessary to reach your child's goals. At times, however, there may be a need to cancel your appointment. These situations may include unforeseen circumstances, vacations, and illness. If your child is sick please cancel your appointment to prevent the spreading of germs to the other children at the clinic and the clinician. *Sick children usually cannot concentrate and/or respond optimally to the session's tasks.*

How do I know when to keep my child home???

If you are not sure when to bring your child in for therapy or keep him/her home, here is a list of things to check. Your child should stay home if:

- he/she had any VOMITING or DIARRHEA through the night or in the morning
- **ANY FEVER** (i.e. temperature above 37.0 C or 98.6 F) - indicates active infection
- **EARACHE** or any drainage from ear
- **EYE IRRITATIONS** - with yellow discharge or redness - it could be "pink eye" which is contagious
- **NOSE** - runny nose - especially with thick mucus
- **UNTREATED HEAD LICE** - child should stay home until treated with special shampoo or rinse
- **RASHES** - only the doctor can diagnose - please check it out
- **STOMACH ACHES ? - HEADACHES?** Keep your child home for observation. If they happen often, discuss with your school nurse or doctor
- **SORE THROAT** - usually can spread infection, so keep child home
- **COUGH** - any continuous coughing

Basically, if they are contagious and/or will not respond optimally in the session, please cancel your appointment. *Please do not bring sick siblings to the sessions as they also spread germs.*

Therapy Options

Each child is seen as a unique individual with needs that may be addressed differently than another child. Therefore, some children will have different therapy models than your child. The different options range from parent consultation, preschool monitoring, group, individual, home programming, and a combination of these. Across the region, direct therapy may be offered once a week or twice a week (for a shorter period of time) depending on the clinician's availability and the needs of the child. Within these models our department also runs on a **block system**. This means that a child will receive therapy for a period of time and then will be given a rest to allow for further carryover/mastering of the

goals within his/her everyday environment. Continual discharge planning will occur. (See discharge policies for further details).

Age Mandates

The Ministry has established an age limit to our services. We can only provide service to children until entry in the second year of Full Day Kindergarten. Once a child enters school, information regarding progress and current status can be forwarded to your child's school, but only with your consent.

Communicative Disorders Assistants (CDA)

We are happy to say that our department employs CDAs to help carry out programming goals. This allows us to help more children in the Region. Should your child be working with the CDA, keep in mind that all assessing and program planning will be carried out by a qualified Speech Language Pathologist. The CDA carries out these goals with input from the Speech Pathologist.

Educational Placement

Occasionally, SSN will provide the opportunity to students in either a graduate speech pathology program or in a CDA program to work toward their degree by providing an educational placement. You will be notified prior to them working with your child. Students are fully supervised and monitored by the Speech Language Pathologist as per College guidelines.

Cancellations

From time to time, there may be cancellations by the clinician. This may be due to meetings, educational opportunities, illness, vacation, etc. A missed appointment by the clinician will be made up. One cancelled appointment by the family will be made up but any further cancellations will be counted toward total number of treatment sessions. All no showed appointments without prior notification are counted. In case of **inclement weather** please call your therapist and listen to their recorded message to find out if the office is open. You may also check the Niagara Children's Centre Website if that is your location of service.

*** FOR MORE INFORMATION please see our website at www.speechservicesniagara.ca



Speech Services Niagara Discharge Policy:

Discharge is considered when even one of the following conditions are present:

1. Child's skills are within normal limits or child has mastered 80% of each established goal/target.
2. If there is lack of progress or inability to retain acquired skills due to failure to uphold attendance regulations (excessive cancellations of scheduled visits that impacts on ability to acquire skills) or failure to follow through on the treatment plan, the child will be put on rest with a home program. When the child returns for their second block, a discussion with parents centers around their role in helping their child through home suggestions and regular attendance and the most appropriate model of intervention is chosen in conjunction with the parent. The parent has the option of choosing to be discharged and resume services at a later time that is more conducive to the needs of their family.
3. Two missed appointments without notice constitutes a discharge.
4. The child does not meet admission criteria.
5. Speech and language services are transferred to another agency.
6. Parent/guardian declines assessment or therapeutic involvement at any time during the course of intervention.
7. Child is now eligible for senior kindergarten (Cut off age mandate of Ministry of Child and Youth Services) or was referred by the JK teacher and has received one block of intervention.
8. Family moves out of the catchment area.
9. Family is unreachable/do not respond to formal letter sent after two attempted phone messages, or four attempted calls with no message (calls must be made at a variety of times). Discharge may occur after leaving a message on voice mail provided that the answering machine states the family's name ensuring the correct contact number is used and that there is at least a one week window between call and discharge date.

*Discharge planning will occur continually throughout treatment.

YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety & Wellness is a Team Effort... And You are an Important Member of the Team. Think Safe...Communicate.

- Make sure SSN staff involved in your child's services have your child's important health information
- Keep important health information on your child in a binder or other organized system

Ask if you don't understand

- If you don't understand some part of your child's treatment plan ask your therapist to explain why things are being done the way they are. If you still have concerns ask again.

Help Keep Us All Safe

- Call your therapist if you or your child are ill
- Always remember to wash or sanitize your hands
- Cough and sneeze into your shoulder or sleeve - not into your hands
- Do not smoke on Centre/satellite property
- Do not smoke while Speech Pathologist is in your home
- Keep animals under control while Speech Pathologist is in your home, staff will inform you of any pet allergies
- Make sure that there is a clean and safe area in your home when there is a home visit

Fragrances and Environmental Irritants

- Staff and other families or children at your treatment location may be sensitive to perfumes and strong scents, please refrain from wearing these when you attend for appointments

Allergies, Peanuts and Latex

- Directly inform your clinician that you are involved with, about any allergies that your child may have
- If your child requires an epi pen, please ensure that you have one with you when attending appointments
- Please avoid bringing any food or other products containing peanuts or latex to the centre.

Medication Safety

- Ensure staff are aware of the name and any possible side effects of any medication your child is taking

Help Prevent Falls

- Help keep hallways free of clutter and obstacles, report any tripping hazards both inside and outside the building
- Always watch your children in our waiting room or therapy areas
- Make sure you and your children are wearing appropriate footwear, and be cautious of slippery floors during poor weather
- Encourage all children to walk, not run in our building

STOP & Clean your Hands

- Keeping your hands clean is the best way of preventing the spread of germs
- Use the hand sanitizers in the front lobby upon entering the building
- Wash your hands after handling any type of soiled material or using the bathroom
- Niagara Children's Centre staff are committed to sanitizing their hands prior to and after working with your child. Feel free to ask them if they have done so
- Therapy equipment and surfaces used are cleaned and maintained to ensure everyone's wellness and safety

Help Prevent the Spread of Infections

- If you or your child is sick, contact us to cancel your child's appointment. For further information see the "When to Keep Your Child or Yourself Home"
- Getting the flu shot is a good way of reducing the risk of illness due to the influenza virus. The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends yearly vaccination for children and adults who are at risk for complications due to influenza. Ask your doctor.
- Your child should be immunized unless their condition prevents this. Please speak to your doctor. Please inform your clinician if your child has not received their recommended immunizations.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff must report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) any reasonable concerns of abuse. As a parent/guardian it is your responsibility to report any concerns regarding caregivers who may be involved with your child. Child abuse happens when a child's parent or other person in charge harms or neglects a child.

What is physical child abuse? Beating, slapping, hitting, pushing, throwing, shaking, burning

What is sexual abuse? Sexual abuse happens when a parent or other person in charge sexually molests or uses a child for sexual purposes or knowingly fails to protect a child from sexual abuse

What is emotional abuse? Yelling at, screaming at, threatening, frightening, or bullying a child, humiliating the child, name-calling or saying things like: "You're no good". "You're worthless"., showing little to no physical affection or attention

What is Neglect? Not providing proper food and clothing, supervision, medical care

To contact FACS- Niagara (Children's Aid) call 1-888-937-7731 24 Hour Emergency Service

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Speech Services Niagara is a partnership between the Niagara Children’s Centre and the Niagara Health System. Niagara Children’s Centre is the lead agency for Speech Services Niagara. The following chart gives an overview of the services provided by the lead agency. For more information please refer to the website www.niagarachildrencentre.com and search under specific programs and services.

PROGRAM	SERVICE	ELIGIBILITY
Infant and preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education Resource • Occupational Therapy • Physiotherapy • Speech-language Pathology • Social Work • Aquatics 	Children from birth to entry to Junior Kindergarten, living in the Niagara Region, demonstrating a developmental, physical or communication delay or disability
School Aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Therapy • Physiotherapy • Speech-language Pathology • Therapeutic Recreation • Social Work • Aquatics 	Children and youth from 4 to 18 years of age, living in the Niagara Region, demonstrating a developmental delay or a physical disability
Technical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augmentative Communication (CAST) • Seating and Mobility • Gait Analysis 	<p>Children and youth from birth to 18 years living in the Niagara Region, who require alternative or augmentative communication for speaking or writing.</p> <p>Children and youth from birth to 18 years, living in the Niagara Region, who require a seating device or wheelchair</p> <p>Children and youth from birth to 18 years, living in the Niagara Region, who require analysis of movement.</p>

PROGRAM	SERVICE	ELIGIBILITY
Preschool Speech and Language(Speech Services Niagara)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-language Pathology 	Children from birth to living in the Niagara Region, where there is a concern about the development of speech and language.
Infant Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing Screening • Auditory Verbal Therapy • Social Work 	
Medical Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Pediatrician • Orthopedic Consultant 	Children from birth to 18 years, living in Niagara Region, by therapist referral
Special Services at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program assistant • Social work 	Children birth to 18 years, living in Region of Niagara, with a physical disability ¹
Early Literacy Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergent Literacy Specialists • Speech-language Pathologists 	Children from birth to SK eligible age, living in Niagara Region

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE LEAD AGENCY

Centre Emergency Procedures

- Familiarize yourself with the Centre Emergency procedures posted in reception and on bulletin boards in the hallways.
- The Centre is obligated to practice emergency procedures on a regular basis. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause while you are attending an appointment.
- Centre staff will assist you in the case of an emergency procedure.
- Please let us know if we need to make any special accommodations for you or your child in the case of an emergency procedure

Centre Closures

- In case of inclement weather, your safety and the safety of your child is important
- Closures will be broadcast on local radio stations
- Closures are also posted on the Centre website and announced on our voice mail system
- If the Centre is open during inclement weather, please check local travel conditions before coming to your child's appointment. Please call to cancel your appointment if you do not feel it is safe to travel.

Car Safety

- All children should be secured in a car using an appropriate car seat.
- http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/carseats.aspx

Personal Property

- The Centre does not take responsibility for the loss of personal items while you are on centre property. Please ensure that you keep any valuables with you at all times.

Privacy and Social Media

- We take great care to protect the privacy of our clients, visitors and employees, particularly in light of the widespread use of social media (e.g. Facebook; YouTube; blogs). If you wish to photograph or video your child while they are involved in services at the Centre, we ask that you first discuss this with your therapist to ensure that this does not interfere with therapy, and that the privacy of others is protected. Unless other consent has been provided, the images may only include your child and you/your family. You must also have permission from your therapist to take any images of her/him.

OTHER INFORMATION HANDOUTS AVAILABLE TO PARENTS FROM THE LEAD AGENCY

If you are interested in the following handouts please visit

www.niagarachildrenscentre.ca

- Who may be a part of your child's team
- How will my child be involved with services
- Therapy Goals and Outcomes
- How to Search for Information/Internet Resources
- Keeping Organized
- Financial Resources
- Transition to School
- Transition to Adult Services
- Self Help / Parent Advocacy
- Community Resources
- Back Care and Lifting
- Child Development
- Childhood Conditions
- Private Therapy
- Assistive Technology and Adaptive Devices
- Niagara Children's Centre Code of Conduct
- Niagara Children's Centre Strategic Plan
- Niagara Children's Centre Accessibility Plan
- Niagara Children's Centre Annual Report