

Involving Parents in Speech and Language Therapy.

If you are considering using a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) or if you have recently either had an assessment or started intervention, you might be wondering *'what is my role in my child's therapy?'* You might be curious about *what the SLT will do* and *'will my child willingly take part?'* You may wonder *if your child will cooperate better if you aren't in the room.* You may question whether you should support the therapeutic process at home and how you can do this.

These are great questions to ask! Here at 'Catherine Ornstein Speech Therapy' you are encouraged to be an integral part of your child's intervention. Why? Because your insight and involvement is crucial to the success of the speech therapy process.

Lauren Lowry (on behalf of the Hanen Centre) provides a summary about the importance of parent involvement in child intervention in the following:

- Your child learns to communicate during everyday activities and conversations with the important people in their lives – you
- You have many more opportunities to interact with your child in meaningful everyday situations than your SLT does
- You know your child the best and are their first teacher

By **choosing an SLT service that empowers you to help your child**, we can teach you to use specific strategies during everyday activities and, in doing so, achieve better quality family time. As a parent of a child with an Auditory Processing Disorder, Language Disorder, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, Catherine understands the importance of implementing therapeutic strategies and activities in the everyday activities. It enables you to help your child learn while communicating about the things that are most interesting, familiar and important to them. Your unique knowledge of your child, including how they communicate at home and with others, will help inform assessment results and guide the ongoing therapy sessions. And helping your child communicate as well as (s)he can do when with his/her family is extremely important for self-esteem and creating good family relationships.

Parental involvement = greater success, more quickly

If you consider what happens when you walk across grass -your footprints leave an impression, but only for a second. It isn't until you have established an ongoing routine of walking backwards and forwards across the same patch of grass or carpet, that you will see a lasting impression of the path you have taken.

This idea is pertinent to Speech and Language Therapy. When you attend a therapy session once a week or once a fortnight, the 'impression' or what was learnt will start to fade in between sessions. However, if what is learnt in the speech therapy session is continued at home and during everyday activities,

the 'impression' will become ingrained, a part of your child's everyday, and you will see their communication skills grow with greater ease, at greater pace and see skills generalised.

By using a '**parent-implemented intervention**', we can ensure that Speech and Language Therapy:

- is extended and incorporated into every part of your child's day
- involves communication between child and parent, not child and Speech & Language Therapist
- involves play and daily activities (such as mealtime, bath time and bed time) that are familiar and meaningful to the child, instead of unfamiliar clinic-based activities
- can happen on an ongoing basis in comfortable surroundings
- is motivating and fun for your child

Our mutual goal is to enable your child to achieve good communication and to feel good about themselves in any situation. Catherine will help you work out how to include targets within your family routine and support you each session as you reflect on your progress.

Catherine aims to develop the understanding of not only children, but for those who care for and support them – you. As your child grows and develops during their Speech and Language Therapy sessions, we will support you and help you develop the right skills to assist them at home.

Catherine also wants you to feel you are not on your own. You're not! Why not come along to the **parent group support sessions** where you can meet others in similar situations and share your story and experiences and find support and friendship.

Some of the above is based on the Australian 'A Growing Understanding Speech Therapy Service.

For further information please see

<https://www.agrowingunderstanding.com.au/the-importance-of-parent-involvement-in-speech-therapy/>