



Hamilton-Wentworth  
Catholic District School Board  
*Believing, Achieving, Serving*

## ***Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) – Communication Support Services***

### **Service Delivery Model**

#### **Philosophy**

All students require a sense of belonging: this is best achieved with their peers in their home schools. A school setting provides an environment where “communication and social skills are best learned in the context of natural routines” (Janzen, J. E. 1996). Resource support is provided to school personnel, so that opportunities for developing communication skills can be maximized and included within the context of the child’s learning environment. Communication Support Services are available through the Speech, Language and Hearing Department.

#### **Communication Supports**

Speech - language pathology services are provided on a consultative basis.

As part of the ASD Team, speech-language pathologists, who are Regulated Health Professionals registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO), may be requested to consult to a school regarding communication programming with respect to a particular student. Speech-language pathologists have specialized training in communication disorders including non-verbal communication, speech (articulation), language (comprehension and expression) and social interaction.

#### **Referral Process**

Involvement of the ASD Team is initiated by the school principal. Notification is forwarded to the school once the referral has been processed and assigned to a worker.

Requests for service are recorded and consultation occurs sequentially based on the date of request. However priority is given to students who are new to the system or who have transferred to a new school. Informed Consent is required from the student’s parents/guardians. Regulations governing Informed Consent and Privacy require parental consent to be given verbally. Re-referral may be required after two years if no further requests for speech-language pathology services have been made by the school.

## **Service Provision**

Individualized consultation is provided. This could involve:

- contact with parents/guardians (i.e. to establish informed consent)
- discussion with the classroom teacher
- observation of the student
- interaction with student
- formal and/or informal assessment
- discussion with school-based staff
- development of recommendations regarding communication programming
- assistance with goal setting and program development
- recommendations regarding use of strategies to support communication
- recommendations regarding use of augmentative resources (or materials) to support communication
- in-service related to use of computer programs and/or assistive technology

As part of the consultation process a written report is provided documenting the speech-language pathologist's involvement and recommendations. This report is shared with parents/guardians and school staff and could be presented at the next scheduled IPRC meeting.

## **Program Implementation**

Decisions regarding program goals and program implementation are the responsibility of the school principal. The ASD Speech-Language Pathologist provides recommendations and support to school-based staff in collaboration with other members of the ASD Team.