



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

Augmentative Communication 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. Augmentative Communication Support Services are available through the Speech, Language and Hearing Department.

Augmentative Communication Team

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

The Centrally based Augmentative Communication Team (ACT) consists of a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and a specially trained educational assistant who works under the supervision of the SLP. SLPs are Regulated Health Professionals registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) and have specialized training in communication disorders including non-verbal communication.

Referral Process

Involvement of the Augmentative Communication Team (ACT) 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 may involve a variety of activities including:

- 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. ACT members are available to provide in class coaching/demonstration of techniques and strategies as required. The speech-language pathologist provides recommendations and support to school staff in collaboration with other support staff.