



Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District

HEALTH UNIT

Your Partner in Health

April 28, 2011

The Honourable Laurel Broten
 Minister of Children and Youth Services
 Minister's Office
 14th Floor
 56 Wellesley St. W.
 Toronto, ON
 M5S 2S3

Dear Minister:

Subject: Increased Funding for Preschool Speech and Language Program

At the Board of Health Meeting held on April 28, 2011 the Rideau Valley Preschool Speech and Language Program (Language Express) submitted their budget along with a letter addressed to Ms. Julie Mathien, Director of the Early Learning and Child Development Branch in Toronto. (Appendix #1) This letter outlines the difficulties that the program faces without any increase in budget.

The goal of the Preschool Speech Language Program is to ensure that preschool children are given the best opportunity to reach their full communication potential. Children with speech difficulties are at risk for learning problems as well as poor social integration. Without proper funding for the Speech and Language Program, the commitment made by the Government of Ontario to ensure successful development of the early years' population is undermined.

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The Honourable Laurel Broten
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We ask that the Minister consider increased funding for the Preschool Speech and Language Program to ensure that our children are given the foundation for success in early learning.

Sincerely,

THE CORPORATION OF THE LEEDS, GRENVILLE
AND LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

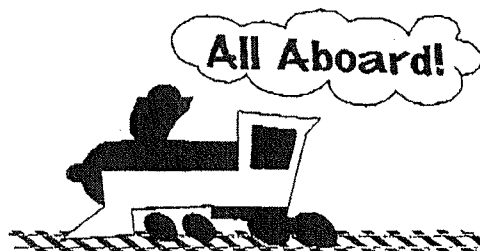
Original signed by

(Mr.) Jack Butt
Chair of the Board

JB/hb

Encl.

c: Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Steve Clark, MPP for Leeds and Grenville
Randy Hillier, MPP for Lanark, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
Norm Sterling, MPP for Carleton Mississippi Mills
Ontario Boards of Health



THE LANGUAGE EXPRESS

Preschool Speech Language Services

intake line: 1-888-503-8885 website: language-express.ca

Sponsored by the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

April 28, 2011

Ms. Julie Mathien, Director
Early Learning and Child Development Branch
Strategic Policy and Planning Division
3rd Floor, 101 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M5S 2Z7

Dear Ms. Mathien:

Please find enclosed the 2011-2012 Budget Request Form for the Rideau Valley Preschool Speech and Language Program (Language Express), in the amount of \$415,964, as approved in principle by the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Board of Health.

The request reflects the same base budget amount as our 2010- 2011 budget. However, costs for salaries, benefits, rent, etc. have increased by \$20,100. These increases have significantly reduced the services we can provide. Since the funding envelope has been frozen, we have had to implement the following strategies over the last few years:

- Reduce contract SLP services;
- Reduce professional development and training;
- Reduce funding for program resources and supplies such as tests and therapy materials;
- Reduce the amount of public awareness and health promotion we do;
- Increase wait times for assessment and intervention;
- Completely re-structure Language Express service delivery model in order to cope with increased referrals and reduced staffing.

Our caseloads continue to grow, as do our waiting lists. Numbers of referrals to Language Express have increased 82% compared to last year during the same time period. We believe that the increase in the number of referrals can be attributed to the success of our campaign to promote early identification and referral. There are 186 children (up 42% from 2009/10) waiting for initial assessment (average wait time 19 weeks) and 57 children (up 58% from 2009/10) waiting for their first intervention (average wait time 8 weeks). Please find attached document to support comparisons. Current wait times are unacceptable. The demographics of our area (rural with greater than average numbers of at-risk children and families) contribute to the increase in numbers of children being referred for PSL Services. All of these factors increase our costs, resulting with our services not meeting the increase in local demand. The change in the service delivery model has resulted in services for children being more thinly spread out in order that service remains equitable across Lanark, Leeds and Grenville counties. This is difficult for our program because we know and believe that Preschool Speech and Language intervention lays the foundation of success in early learning and in school.

LANGUAGE EXPRESS CENTRAL OFFICE

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KEMPTVILLE Language Express

☐ Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
Box 343, 8 Ave St., Unit 2
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Phone: (613) 258-5941
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BROCKVILLE McDougall Health Services Building 70 Charles St. Brockville, ON K6V 1T3

☐ Speech Language Services
Phone: (613) 345-5645
Fax: (613) 345-3537

☐ Early Language Development Services
Phone: (613) 342-0823
Fax: (613) 345-3537

PERTH/SMITHS FALLS Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital

☐ Smiths Falls Site - 60 Cornelia St., W.
Smiths Falls, ON K7A 2H9
Phone: (613) 283-2330
Fax: (613) 283-2898

☐ Perth Site - 30 Drummond St., W.
Perth, ON K7H 2K1
Phone: (613) 267-1500
Fax: (613) 264-0365

CARLETON PLACE Lanark Community Programs Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital

☐ 103 Judson St.
Carleton Place, ON K7C 2S5
Phone: (613) 257-7121
Fax: (613) 257-2675

☐ 30 Bennett St., Unit 2
Carleton Place, ON K7C 4S8
Phone: (613) 257-7619
Fax: (613) 257-2209

We had hoped to allocate more Speech and Language Pathologist contract time to the development and implementation of more parent-training and group programming for some of our harder-to-serve population. This would further reduce the need for one-to-one intervention for these children and help to move us toward more equitable service across our region, thus reducing wait times. Projects like these require planning and coordination time in early stages, but the attached budget leaves no room for this.

We will continue to rely on the support of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services one-time grant funds for various programming needs, but we are also aware that these funds are not always available. We believe that the Motor Speech Pilot Project is very worthwhile. However, the SLP involved in the project is less available to provide assessment and intervention to the children on the waiting list for service in her region, thus, increasing the wait time for eligible children.

The increases in costs for salaries, benefits and operating costs are reducing our ability to offer and sustain quality service to families, especially as the number of children requiring PSL services continues to rise. We feel that the continued ability of the Rideau Valley Preschool Speech and Language Program to provide quality service, with excellent child and family outcomes, is in jeopardy. Please consider these points when reviewing our budget request.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Robinson,
Clinical Coordinator,
Rideau Valley PSL

Cindy Goodfellow,
Administrative Coordinator,
Rideau Valley PSL

Attachment (1)

PSL Services	3rd Quarter 2009	3rd Quarter 2010	Comparison 2009 - 2010
# of referred children who received an assessment	64	86	↑34%
# of all referred children who received service	376	390	↑4%
# of new children registered	83	151	↑82%
# of referred children waiting for initial assessment	131	186	↑42%

