

Let's talk about ...

From time to time, we will bring you informative articles written by our YVY Special Services providers, drawing on their experience in the field. Here is the first of these articles.

Speech/Language Therapy

Before any therapy can begin, goals must be set. The therapist then looks for the most efficient ways for these goals to be achieved. Here, Ruth Gaerman, one of YVY's speech providers, explains how play can help achieve therapeutic goals.

How Are Goals Achieved ?

Most often, language flourishes in natural, everyday settings. What is considered "natural" will, of course, differ with each particular age. As such, a nursery or kindergarten child, who normally spends most of his day squatting beside dump trucks or creating masterpieces while knuckle-deep in paint and glue, will need that same kind of structured free play in order to facilitate his therapeutic goals. Even oral-motor therapy (therapy designed to strengthen the tongue, lips, and jaw), while targeting specific muscle groups so necessary for speech production, can look like somebody's having a party -- complete with blowing horns, twisted straws, and the chewiest or crunchiest food treats one can imagine! Older children also benefit more from working within the framework of games and contests, rather than working with long lists of unattached words.

Parents are particularly important in helping their children achieve the goals set for them. No one can simulate the natural environment in which a child's skills can flourish as well as the parents because they are the child's natural environment. Within this environment there are

many opportunities to help a child use language in a "fun" way. On a trip to the doctor, the child can be prompted to comment on "big/little" trucks, or "red/yellow/blue" cars. At home or at the supermarket, he can be asked to name foods that start with specific letters in a game where he gets "points." The opportunities for practicing language in a playful context are limited only by the parent's imagination - and consultation with the speech therapist.

We are all more ready to express ourselves verbally when we are more relaxed. A child is no different. He will be more apt to use his language skills when he is having fun

When your child needs therapy, he may be using the toys/games of his choice, but the therapist (or parent) has the goals of her choice in mind. It may look like play, but it works!

