



Philadelphia Infant Toddler Early Intervention

**Promoting the Language Development
of Infants and Toddlers**

Using

Teachers with Additional Communications
Training

Information for Parents

08/2013

Dear Families,

One of the guiding principles of Early Intervention is that all the service providers should be aware of and working on all of a child's outcomes on the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). With that in mind, we have focused our training in recent years to help service providers facilitate early language and communication skills in young children.

In Philadelphia County we have developed a specialty group from among our teachers (special instructors). These teachers are called Teachers with Additional Communications Training (T/ACT). If your Service Coordinator has given you this booklet, it is because a T/ACT has been recommended by the team to address the communication outcomes on your child's IFSP.

In keeping with our goal to strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental needs of their children who have delays, we have decided to enhance the skills of T/ACTs by giving them competency based training on enhancing language and communication in young children. We also work with the agencies where the T/ACTs are employed to ensure that they have the support they need to work effectively with families and children.

I have outlined more details about how we have built this model of service in Philadelphia County on page 2 of the booklet. I hope this booklet is helpful to you. I would like to hear about your experience working with our Teachers with Additional Communications Training and about the progress you and your child are making. Please call or email me directly and leave a message if I am not at my desk when you call. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Sharon Burke, Program Manager
Philadelphia County Infant Toddler Early Intervention
215-685-5941
sharon.burke@phila.gov

For more information on language development, the materials used to train our Teachers with Additional Communications Training, research and models that use parents and trained professionals (other than speech language pathologists) to stimulate language, consult the following:

Suggested reading:

- *“Language Disorders from Infancy through Adolescence”*
by Paul Rhea, 2001
- *“The Efficacy of Treatment For Children with Developmental Speech and Language Delay/Disorder: A Meta-Analysis”* by James Law, Zoë Garrett and Chad Nye, *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, August 2004
- *“It Takes Two to Talk: A practical guide for parent’s of children with language delays”* by J Pepper and E Weitzman, 2004

Websites to visit:

- www.hanen.org about the Hanen© Program
- <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/helping-learn-to-talk.html> about tips to help your child learn to talk

History of the Teachers with Additional Communication Training Approach:

In 2002, more than a dozen Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) were certified in the Hanen© curriculum. These certified SLPs then worked with the County to develop training for the Special Instructors (SI) in our system. All of the SIs in Philadelphia County, and several other service providers took the course we developed and demonstrated competency in applying Hanen© principles. Competency based training means that in order to pass the course and advance to the next level, staff must demonstrate through the use of videotapes that they are able to use the technique and can apply the information and techniques to their practice. Additionally, they must demonstrate that they are able to teach the language stimulation technique to parents.

The T/ACTs then began to use the Hanen© method of enhancing communication with children and parents. Parents called us to share how excited they were about the Hanen© principles and how effective this approach was in helping their child communicate. Based on this very positive response from families we planned the implementation of a citywide approach to the use of the Teachers with Additional Communications Training.

The Teachers with Additional Communication Training (T/ACT):

- **Works with infants and very young children** to prevent developmental speech and language concerns by encouraging sound production and by promoting a child's comprehension of language.
- **Works with the family** to create an environment that supports the child's achievement of communications outcomes.
- **Provides language stimulation** that captures a child's attention and supports communication development.
- **Addresses communication concerns** if the child's language is progressing at the same level or slightly behind other skills and no specialized issues are present.
- **Works with children whose level of language development is behind** that of other developmental areas.

In 2009, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania adapted the T/ACT approach to develop the statewide Early Intervention Language Coach Credential. All Philadelphia T/ACTs, as of 2009, were eligible and received certification from OCDEL for the Early Intervention Language Coach Credential.

The Philadelphia County Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program continues to train and designate Teachers with Additional Communications Training (T/ACT). Special Instructors may also choose to the Commonwealth's Early Language Coach Credential.

In order to be designated as a T/ACT in Philadelphia, the teacher must be employed at one of the identified agencies and demonstrate competency in the following topic areas:

Facilitating Early Communication based on Hanen Principles -

Teachers learn to facilitate the communication of young children using four (4) key strategies. They also learn how to teach these strategies to parents.

The Foundations of Language Development - Teachers learn the basics of child development and how the young child develops language.

Oral Language Development – Teachers learn about the major theories of oral language acquisition and development, and language and communication delays that are associated with specific disabilities.

Indirect Language Stimulation – Teachers learn to use, and teach parents, indirect language stimulation techniques.

The Philadelphia County Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program designates the agencies that will nurture and support the skill development of Teachers with Additional Communications Training (T/ACT). These are the designated agencies:

Classic Rehab
KenCrest
Kutest Kids
Rescare
Sunshine Therapy Club II

RHD
SPIN
Sunny Days
Therapy Solutions
Village Care