

Pre-Conference A



Communication Foundations for Children with Down Syndrome



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Families have many questions about communication in young children with DS, especially, "When will my child talk?" Participants in this interactive workshop will take an in-depth look at speech and language development in children with DS. Discussion will include treatment techniques, current trends in evidence-based practice, and alternatives to spoken communication. Family-friendly tips, tricks, and tools will be shared throughout the workshop. This pre-conference session is geared toward families with children from birth – preschool.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how express strengths commonly seen among young children with DS and how these can be used to build communication skills.
2. Understand how to structure a play-based activity to increase the child's communication response.
3. Locate resources related to at-home activities for specific stages of communication.

Outline:

- I. Foundations for communication
 - A. Your child's unique profile and internal factors that influence communication development
 1. Cognitive and motor development
 2. Sensory processing and organization
 3. Hearing and vision
 - B. External influences on communication development
- II. Communication development profiles in children with DS
 - A. Listening, understanding, and talking
 - B. Social language
 - C. Changes in communication including regression or lack of development
 - D. Alternatives to speech: Understanding augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) options

- III. Ways to encourage communication by stage of development
 - A. Early months through first year; discussion on sign language
 - B. Toddler
 - C. Toddler to preschool transition
 - D. Preschool

- IV. What is evidence-based practice and why it matters for my child's treatment
 - A. Determining appropriate therapy techniques using EBP
 - B. How do I know if my child's therapist is choosing the right intervention methods
 - C. Products for sale: Worksheet for considering recommended products

- V. Resources for home
 - A. Web-based resources
 - B. Favorite books and materials

About the Speaker:

Jennifer Bekins is the Speech-Language Pathology Coordinator for the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics and lead speech-language pathologist in the Jane and Richard Thomas Center for Down Syndrome at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Jennifer has practiced since 2001 upon graduating from Loyola University Maryland. Her focus on children with DS includes speech-language disorders, dual diagnosis of DS & autism, and feeding disorders. Jennifer's participation in the DS community began in 1988 with the birth of her sister.