

Referral Eligibility

- Children must live within the Niagara Region regardless of where they attend Child Care. Children in neighbouring cities are serviced by:
 - Hamilton Preschool Speech and Language Program ("Early Words"): 905-381-2828 ext. 233
 - Brant Haldimand-Norfolk Preschool Speech & Language Program: 1-800-454-7186
- Children cannot be referred without completion of the Niagara Children's Centre Speech and Language Referral Checklist & a result that indicates a referral is warranted
- ALL children must be referred by August 31st prior to starting Year One Kindergarten. Children referred the calendar year of school entry may receive limited services.
- Do not refer children who are in school or are age-eligible for school.
 - For children already attending Year One Kindergarten (virtually or in-person), it is the responsibility of the school to refer to the appropriate Speech-Language Pathologist (School Board or Niagara Children's Centre School Based Rehabilitation Services).
 - Children who are age-eligible for Year One Kindergarten but who are officially home-schooled or who attend a private school registered with the Ministry of Education may be eligible for Speech-Language Pathology services through the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). Please inquire about eligibility and referral processes directly with the LHIN 1 800 810 0000.
 - Children who are age-eligible for Year One Kindergarten who are not attending publically funded schools, private schools registered with the Ministry of Education, or are not officially homeschooled do not have access to publically funded speech-language pathology.
- Do not refer children who are already involved with a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) at Niagara Children's Centre (or who are waiting for active service). Contact the child's SLP to collaborate regarding strategies & ask the parent(s)/guardian (s) to share reports and consultation notes with you (these will not be sent to Child Care centres or Resource Consultants).
- All French speaking families who meet French eligibility criteria will receive services in French

Referral Pathways

1) Referral Checklist completed by RECE on Prescribed QCCN Schedule

The RECE (or RC if already involved with child/EarlyON location):

- Identifies a concern after completion of Referral Checklist administered on prescribed QCCN Schedule
 - Within 6-8 weeks of starting at a child care site and annually thereafter at the anniversary of the first Checklist completion. Remember 'Early Identification, Early Referral': do not wait

- for completion of the Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS) or Diagnostic Inventory of Screening Children (DISC)
- Discusses results with the parent/guardian and obtains consent for referral
 - Ensures the parent/guardian understands that they must bring their child into one of the Niagara Children’s Centre sites for the assessment
 - Communicates to the parent that the preferred process is not for the parent to call the Centre themselves to make a parent-referral; Stress that:
 - The Centre values receiving the Checklist with both educator and parent input to assist with assessment
 - The referral will be submitted within one week of the parent signing the referral form (i.e. it will be timely)
 - *If the parent/guardian does parent refer before the referral is submitted/received, the Child Care should still submit the Referral Checklist to the Centre’s Intake
 - Completes the Niagara Children’s Centre Speech and Language Referral Form (includes obtaining a parent/guardian signature) and attaches to Referral Checklist
 - Faxes or mails the two documents (i.e., Referral Form and Referral Checklist) to Central Intake. Fax # 905-688-9181 Address - 567 Glenridge Avenue St. Catharines, ON L2T 4C2. Incomplete documentation will be returned.

2) Referral Checklist completed by RECE outside prescribed schedule

- If the parent/guardian identifies concerns to the Educator or the Educator identifies concerns outside prescribed QCCN completion schedule (i.e. the child is not “due” for completion of the Referral Checklist), the Referral Checklist should be completed at the time the concern is identified. If a referral is indicated, follow steps from #1.

3) Parent/Guardian calls Niagara Children’s Centre Intake to make a parent-referral (not-preferred)

- The parents/guardian will be asked if their child attends a licenced child care, but they will **not** be re-directed back to the child care for Referral Checklist completion (this will be done over the phone)
- For quality monitoring purposes (to ensure QCCN processes are clear and being followed), the parent/guardian will also be asked:
 - If a Referral Checklist was completed by an Educator at the Child Care
 - If an Educator at the Child Care identified communication concerns and asked them to make a parent-referral
 - If they identified communication concerns to an Educator at the Child Care
- If you are aware that a parent referred a child at your child care and you did not complete the referral procedure, do not count that as a referral made by your agency in your monthly data submission.
 - If you did complete a checklist but the parent-self referred before you could submit, you can count this as a referral as long as you submit the checklist/referral form

Next Steps

- Intake Coordinators will complete an intake with family and book an initial assessment (typically occurs within 2-3 months) at the Niagara Children's Centre or at a satellite location based on child's communication needs, family preferences, and staff availability
- The Niagara Children's Centre is no longer able to offer initial assessments at the child care site
 - Families who would experience significant hardship with transportation should indicate these concerns to Central Intake for case-by-case problem-solving