

A road map for parents explaining the public health care system in Montreal and surrounding areas as it relates to speech and language services

As soon as you have concerns about your child's speech or language development, immediately request that a file be officially opened at your area CLSC (centre local de services communautaires, on-island: <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/ou-aller/clsc/> ; centre local de services communautaires, off-island: <http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca/appl/M02/M02ListeInstLoc.asp>) and request a speech and language screening. If you live on the island of Montreal and your CLSC does not offer speech and language screening or assessment services, your child may be referred to The Montreal Children's Hospital (doctor's referral required; all referrals should go through Central Intake Department, room D-289, fax: 514-412-4398, phone: 514-412-4496). If you live off island and there are no speech and language services at your area CLSC, contact your area CSSS (<http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca/appl/M02/M02ListeInstLoc.asp>) to find out where your child can receive an assessment in the public sector in your geographical area.

Children for whom there are speech and language concerns as well as concerns regarding possible Autism Spectrum Disorder who live on the island of Montreal should be referred to the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinic at The Montreal Children's Hospital, Centre hospitalier universitaire Sainte-Justine, Hôpital Rivière-des-Prairies, or Douglas Mental Health University Institute. Similarly, children from the island of Montreal for whom there are speech and language concerns and concerns regarding possible delays in other areas of development should be referred to the Developmental Progress Clinic at The Montreal Children's Hospital or at Centre hospitalier universitaire Sainte-Justine.

If your child stutters, regardless of where you live, off island or on island, a request can be made for the child to be referred directly to your area rehabilitation centre (Centre de réadaptation en déficience physique, on-island: <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/ou-aller/centres-de-readaptation/>; Centre de réadaptation en déficience physique, off-island: <http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca/appl/M02/M02ListeInstLoc.asp>) by your child's doctor. However, if your child is not yet school aged and lives on the South Shore, he/she should first receive speech therapy at your area CLSC.

For any language concerns in a school-aged child, parents should discuss their concerns with the child's teacher and principal and request school speech and language services, except see note below concerning children with severe learning difficulties.

Our tertiary-care mandate allows us to serve, irrespective of the child's geographical location, children presenting with the following conditions: newly diagnosed neurological condition or unstable neurological condition (e.g., epilepsy), resonance disorders (including disorders due craniofacial differences like cleft lip and palate), voice disorders (e.g., vocal hoarseness), traumatic brain injury (via Neurotrauma Program), or severe learning difficulties with or without concomitant attention issues (via Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Clinic or Learning Progress Clinic of the Child Development Program; a recent psychology evaluation may be required). In the case of children with severe learning difficulties and/or attention problems, a prerequisite is that the difficulties persist despite modifications that were already put in place, suggesting that the current diagnosis is being questioned.

The above information is applicable irrespective of the language(s) spoken by the child.

Alternatively, families may opt to consult a speech-language pathologist in private practice: Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec, www.ooaq.qc.ca, 514-282-9123.

[for more information on speech and language development, visit:
<http://www.thechildren.com/en/departments/index.aspx?myDep=S&ID=63>]