



## **Stephanie Crawford (Speech Pathologist)** ***The Role of Speech Pathology***

A speech pathologist will help your child with their communication. When we talk about communication there are three main areas we think of for children with autism.

- understanding the message
- being able to give your message to other people clearly and effectively
- the understanding of the conversational rules; this means knowing the rules of the conversation and knowing when to take a turn, when you should speak, and how to answer questions.

We think that it is really important to look at each child and their family as individuals and there is no one size fits all for any children, particularly children with autism.

Our therapists are trained in a number of different models; Hanen, DIR Floortime, PECS, visuals, social skills workshops, and workshops around how to make social stories. All of those different things inform our assessment of a child and then help inform our therapy plan. We don't use any one model, and I think that it is really important to use lots of different models because each model offers very different things and each child needs an individually tailored program. The most important thing for parents is that the therapist explains what they are using and why and how they have come to that decision. Parents might find that part of the session is a Floortime model, part of the session is much more structured with the use of PECS and then part of the session might be free play where we look at developing some of the communication skills that are needed in day to day activities like going to kinder and childcare. We make sure that we look at the child first, assess what their needs are and then use strategies from the models that we think are most appropriate for the child's communication goals.

*\*\* This is an approximate transcription only; minor modifications have been made to assist the reader.*