

Institutional Practices of Speech Language Pathology Services

By Michelle Jones

Background

- The Inclusive Early Childhood Service System project (IECSS) is a longitudinal study currently in the third and final year of data collection, in 5 communities across Ontario. This study specifically looks at interviews from families in Wellington County to understand the institutional interactions families have with disability and early childhood services.
- Through interviewing families, the IECSS project has determined that all of the children accessing early intervention services in Wellington County are receiving speech language pathology.
- **Wee Talk:**
 - Speech language pathology services in Wellington County are delivered through Wee Talk.
 - Wee Talk offers assessment, programs and direct and indirect therapy for children (birth to senior kindergarten) in Wellington and Dufferin County and the city of Guelph
 - Wee Talk is funded by: Ministry of Child and Youth Services
 - Wee Talk is delivered by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health as the Lead agency

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Disability Theory

This study examines families' experiences with speech language pathology services in Wellington County through the theoretical perspective of critical disability theory (CDT). CDT is used to determine how the service system conceptualizes speech-language impairments and how that construction affects families' access to services in Wellington County.



Institutional Ethnography

Institutional ethnography is the study of institutions through the work that is done in daily lives. In this case, the IECSS project examines the work that mothers and families do to access services. As a part of the larger IECSS study, this project examines specifically speech and language services as an institutional practice, within the geographic community of Wellington.

Research Question

How does social policy affect the institutional practice of speech language pathology services in Wellington County?

Are these organizational practices supporting institutional or families needs?

Emerging Findings

There are differences in the institutional practices of private and public speech services

- Private services are described as better supports for families with more than one child, with fewer gaps in service

The speech and language services offered in public institutions are not individualized instead they are organized as

- Group therapy and consultation services to childcare
- Providers

Families are using their knowledge of the service system to reduce their waitlist times, receive services and advocate for their children



The service system is using deficit language and comparative assessments

Personal Location

As a child growing up in Wellington County, I was identified as having a learning disability. At the time, I was attending school in the Upper Grand District School Board and the lack of resources in my rural community led my parents to pay for private developmental testing and private tutoring. My family drove 45 minutes to Guelph twice a week to receive these services. I was initially included in the IECSS project as a research assistant. I have chosen to complete a secondary data analysis through the IECSS project for my major research project.

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