

About The Hanen Centre

Founded in 1975, The Hanen Centre is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization with a global reach. Our mission is to provide parents, caregivers, early childhood educators and Speech-language Pathologists/Therapists with the knowledge and training they need to help young children develop the best possible language, social and literacy skills. This includes children with or at risk of language delays and those with developmental challenges such as Autism Spectrum Disorder.



www.hanen.org

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TalkAbility™



The Hanen Program® for Parents of Verbal Children on the Autism Spectrum

Helping your child learn the important skills he needs to have successful social relationships

Information for Parents



TalkAbility™

The Hanen Program® for Parents of Verbal Children on the Autism Spectrum

About the TalkAbility™ Program

TalkAbility is a program for parents of high-functioning verbal children with social communication challenges, including children who have a diagnosis of autism. As a parent, you can see firsthand how your child's social communication difficulties make it challenging for him to connect with others and have meaningful conversations. The *TalkAbility* Program gives you a variety of practical and powerful tools to help your child "tune in" to the feelings and thoughts of others – which is where successful conversations begin. By helping your child see things from another person's perspective, you'll enable him to have more effective conversations and make friends more easily.

Who Does *TalkAbility* Help?

The *TalkAbility* Program is the right fit for you and your child if you can answer "yes" to **more than one** of the following questions:

- Does your child find it difficult to hold a conversation with others?
- Does your child get along better with adults than children?
- Does your child insist on talking to other children about things they aren't interested in?
- Does your child get upset if his or her routines change?

What Parents Learn in the *TalkAbility* Program

At the *TalkAbility* Program, you'll learn practical strategies that you can easily build into your child's everyday life. You'll use these strategies to:

- Help your child have effective back-and-forth conversations
- Encourage your child to pay attention to the social messages people send non-verbally
- Model the language your child needs in order to talk about his feelings and those of other people
- Help your child interact with other children and make friends



The TalkAbility™ Program

Why Are Parents Involved in the *TalkAbility* Program?

Research shows that children on the autism spectrum who have conversations with their parents about what others think and feel learn to appreciate different points of view. Because your child is most comfortable at home with you, there's no better place for him to learn that, in order to be a good communication partner, he must tune-in to the feelings and opinions of others.

Once you've gained the skills to help your child tune-in to others, *TalkAbility* then guides you in helping him to use these skills in order to make friends more easily. You'll gain many ideas and strategies for finding the right friend, knowing when to step in to help the friendship along and when to stay in the background, letting the children work out the play themselves.

The *TalkAbility* Program Offers

- A consultation before the program for you and your child with a Hanen Certified Speech-language Pathologist/Therapist to identify your child's unique needs
- A series of informative and personal classes for small groups of parents, where they can share their stories and learn in a comfortable environment
- Three individual consultations for you and your child with your Hanen Certified Speech-language Pathologist/Therapist during which:
 - ◆ you discuss communication goals and specific strategies that will help your child

- ◆ you are videotaped interacting with your child, using the strategies you learned in the previous group sessions. This video is then reviewed and discussed with you so you can "see" what is helping and what else you can do to help your child learn
- ◆ your child is videotaped playing with another child while you coach and support him as necessary. This videotape is also reviewed and discussed with the Speech-language Pathologist/Therapist

Resource Materials

The *TalkAbility* Program is supported by the Hanen guidebook *TalkAbility: People skills for verbal children on the autism spectrum – A guide for parents* by Fern Sussman. This book contains practical ideas designed to help children have successful social interactions with both adults and other children.

For more information about the *TalkAbility* guidebook, visit www.hanen.org/TAGuidebook

What Parents and Professionals Say

"After my child learned to talk, I didn't know what to do next – I just knew he needed more help. The *TalkAbility* program gave me a thousand new ideas on how to help him progress to the next level, both in his conversation and play with other children. He still plays with the little boy he met through the program."

– **Tracy, mother of Aidan**

"Beautifully written, clear and immediately usable, there are few books that parents will find as accessible and full of useful tips as this one."

– **Simon Baron-Cohen, Ph.D.**

Director, Autism Research Centre
Professor of Developmental Psychopathology
University of Cambridge

What parents learn:

1. How to help your child understand the messages contained in people's facial expressions and gestures.



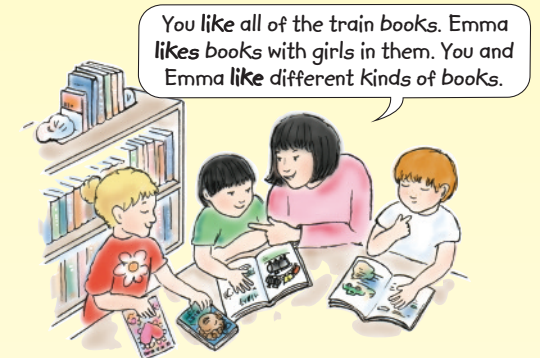
It's easier to notice facial expressions, when you are face-to-face with your child.

3. The power of pretending with your child



By joining in your child's pretend play and adding a new idea, you can help his imagination grow.

2. How to help your child understand how other people think and feel.



Letting your child know that not everyone likes the same books as he does is one easy way to help him understand that people have thoughts that are different from his own.

4. How to be your child's play coach and help him make friends.



By stepping in and being part of the game, you support your child so he feels comfortable with another child. Then, you can step out and let the fun continue.

