

NEWS RELEASE  
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**For immediate release**

## **Sunrise Health Region Celebrates National Speech and Hearing Awareness Month**

One out of every ten individuals in Canada lives with a serious communication disorder affecting their speech, language or hearing. May is National Speech and Hearing Awareness Month and Sunrise Health Region is taking the opportunity to provide information on the services available.

Speech-language pathologists, audiologists and support personnel are located throughout the Sunrise Health Region to assist pre-school aged children and adults. The services they offer relate to speech, language and hearing. The goal is to help clients in hospital and the community to achieve an enhanced quality of life. Speech and hearing professionals are also part of the Integrated Stoke Strategy team for stroke recovery support.

An important component to consider in the development of children's speech and language skills is "screen time". Screen time refers to watching anything with a screen such as televisions, computers and video games. Over the past decade, children have been spending more and more time in front of a screen. Excessive screen time has been linked to childhood obesity, attention deficit, hyperactivity, lower reading scores and the need for constant gratification.

"On average, children are spending about 40 hours a week watching television or playing computer or video games. This is the equivalent of an adult work week," said Krista Herzog, Speech-Language Pathologist with the Sunrise Health Region. "Encouraging children to participate in crafts, sports, visiting the library or any number of outdoor physical activities and family activities can greatly enhance a child's communication skills and overall well-being in a positive way."

The Sunrise Health Region Children's Therapy Program supports children in all aspects of communication including understanding language, expressing ideas and learning social interaction skills. The program provides assessment, consultation, direct therapy, and education for caregivers and others who work with children. A physician referral is not required to access speech and language pathology services.

For more information on speech and hearing disorders, please contact the Sunrise Health Region Children's Therapy Program Speech-Language Pathologists at 786-0600.

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**For information about this news release or to arrange interviews, please contact Sharon Tropin, Director of Communications 306.786.0144.**