

# The *PARENT-ONLY* Appointment

An important step in discerning true help

## THE CHALLENGE:

I know my child well. However, there are areas where I need help and expertise. Physicians, teachers, therapists, and other specialists will be important.

- 1. How do I discern the helpers that I will relate well with and truly be a support?*
- 2. How can I ensure positive choices moving forward and minimize disappointing or even detrimental ones?*



You are an expert on your child. Always bear this in mind. Notwithstanding, all parents, particularly parents of a late talker, benefit from skilled, dedicated helpers. Expert helpers are important partners along the way. As the person who loves, cares and knows their child like no other, **you** will be the best at finding persons to help you and help your child. Use your unique vantage point to discern. Become a critical and proactive consumer of support. Your efforts will enrich yours and your child's experience.

### General Advise:

- Listen to your instincts.
- You should not feel rushed or pressured into making decisions. If you sense pressure tactics, be wary. This is a definite "red flag ." It is fine for a specialist to have convictions and communicate them with passion, but you should not feel pressured. Discussion, give and take, and having sufficient time to consider should never feel questioned. Remember, the best specialists are also excellent listeners!
- One-size-fits-all claims are another definite signal to be wary! How and why does the recommended course of action fit your child.
- Be open about what you need. Describe the situations where you need help. Relating specific situations where you need help is extremely helpful and valuable to the specialist.

- Ask all your questions.
- Embrace and value your knowledge of your child. Likewise, the specialist should also value your knowledge. When you look for a specialist to help you, your input is vital and irreplaceable.

## Specific Strategies: How to make & carryout a “Parent-Only” Appointment

- You have been referred for an evaluation. This evaluation may be with a speech-language pathologist, a developmental pediatrician, neurologist, psychologist, or perhaps it is an evaluation that involves multiple professions (i.e., public school eligibility assessments, comprehensive evaluations at a regional center).
- You have a) followed the referral of your child's health provider or b) you have initiated contact with a clinic that has positive reviews, or perhaps c) have followed up with community-provided state services through early intervention systems, public special preschool, or elementary.
- You have high hopes that the clinic and the evaluator(s) are the right choice and an excellent match for you and your child.
- They have the correct credentials, and you hope for skilled help. More than likely, you have not met the assessors and are unsure about what will occur at your meeting.
- You may receive pre-appointment overview instruction via email, but otherwise, you await the date and time of your appointment when you will meet those with whom you and your child will be interacting. It is common for parents to be feeling apprehension.

### ~So, what's next?~

Late Talkers highly recommends scheduling a pre-appointment with your service provider. We call these pre-appointments: "Parent-Only Appointments."

The professional(s) that you will work with dedicated their study to development, children, and wellness. They are dedicated to positive outcomes for your child. Their motivation is to help and assist you to the best of their ability. To assure this shared goal, parents of late-talking children are encouraged to take a step that is not always provided within the standard process. Pre-appointments are not the standard in many scheduling systems.

A "Parent-Only" appointment is a separate, *pre-appointment* meeting between you and the person seeing your child. This appointment happens well before your child's scheduled appointment, or perhaps even before you make the appointment for your child. It can be in-person or via distance. It is reasonable and advised that you feel a sense of confidence regarding your child's upcoming appointment. To achieve this, you need the opportunity to make an informed choice. This is reasonable and enables you to have the opportunity to:

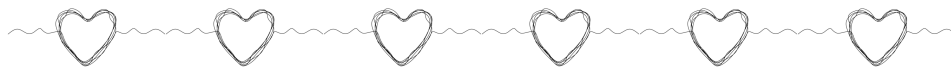
- Meet with the person(s) who will be working with your child and form your impression(s)
- Ask questions that you have about the appointment *before* the specialist sees your child.

- Voice your special considerations about your child *before* the appointment and learn how those concerns will be addressed.
- Be aware of what to expect from the evaluation and from the follow-up procedures ahead of the day.
- Most importantly, you will have an opportunity to form an impression. Follow your impressions! Decide how you wish to move forward as a result.

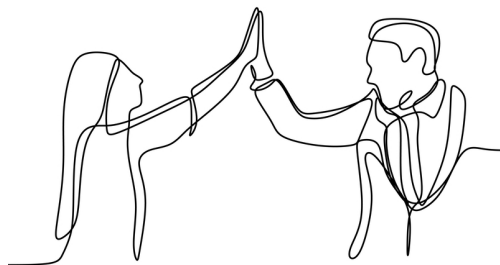
Families will have their unique concerns and questions. Compose your unique discussion points for your "Parent-Only" appointment. Sharing this with your specialist will aid the shared discussion. Late Talkers Foundation has provided sample conversational points to share with your specialist, to help inspire. They follow at the end of this guide.

Parents are experts on their children but may not be experts on developmental lingo. Ask for clarification of any of the terms you hear that are unfamiliar. Explanations should be meaningful to you and appeal to your intelligence.

The time and the likely extra expense in setting up a "Parent-Only Appointment" may seem daunting. The rewards of moving forward in an informed manner and with a person(s) you have confidence and trust is worth it. "Parent-Only Appointments" apply any time a parent is seeking a specialist to help them, whether for an evaluation or ongoing support services.



Finally, remember that  
**-your child is the same precious wonderful child-**  
after your appointment as they were before the evaluation, bringing joy to  
you and others. You are uniquely capable with regard  
to your child, and your child is  
capable as well.



## Sample Questions

What are the various diagnoses made with late talking children at this clinic? *Note: There should be a variety. You may also want to ask about proportions.*

Can you tell me what the appointment will look like?

Will I be able to stay with my child? *Note: If you want to stay with your child this should be acceptable.*

My/our child particularly likes (----fill in the blank----).

My/our goal in for this appointment is (----fill in the blank----). Can you tell me/us what your goals are for this appointment? *Note: There can be differing goals for appointments. For example, if the goal is to establish eligibility for services, that can be very different from differential diagnosis.*

What is your orientation to working with children, particularly for a child my child's age/grade/talking/etc.?

What tests will you be giving? *Note: If you cannot tell by the name what the test is meant to assess, by all means, ask.*

Will you be giving an IQ test? *Note: Verbal tests of intelligence cannot risk underestimating the intelligence of a late talking child.*

What if my child does not respond? How will you "score" or assess my child if they don't participate with a test?

Who/where will you be sending the results?

What if I/we differ with your conclusions or views?

What will I/we know at the conclusion of our appointment?

How will I learn what to do? Will I be clear on how to move forward, after this evaluation?

I am concerned that (----fill in the blank----). Can you advise me?

What if I have questions after I leave the appointment?

Do you have a philosophy toward your practice? What is something you enjoy a lot about your work?

These are meant as suggestions from which you can form your own list. It does not have to be a long list! This time is most valuable in allowing you to form your impressions. You will be very good at this!