

# Communication Readiness Program



## Report 2019

*Lorenzo works on matching words  
in CRP 2019.*



**Down Syndrome  
Connection of the  
Bay Area**

The DSCBA had another successful year implementing the Communication Readiness Program (CRP), providing 16 children ages 4-7 with an intensive six-week, four-day-per-week summer program focused on communication, social, and literacy skills.

The program follows a schedule like one would see in a primary school classroom, with whole group and small group instruction. We provide a one-to-one ratio of adults to participants. Trained professionals, credentialed educators

and specialists, graduate students, and volunteers work with participants to ensure that every child is supported.

The goal of the program is to foster and support functional communication in the program and home environments. A total communication approach to include verbal language and all forms of augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) is provided to support the students in navigating a classroom environment as independently as possible.

**“Rory definitely benefited from CRP! He tries to communicate so much more and is learning to use the AAC device. We also found out more things about Rory that we had concerns about, and CRP helped us with them!”**

# Program Results

CRP components include the following:

**Preparation for the Summer Program**, including meeting with parents and gathering information, including each child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) information if they have one.

**Six-Week Summer Intensive**, from mid-June through the end of July, Monday through Thursday classes at two leased kindergarten classrooms in Danville. Daily activities incorporate communication and include reading, art, music, obstacle courses, following instructions, speech and occupational therapy, snack time, and speech and language assessments.

**Data Collection and Development of Resource Binders:** CRP staff complete a report for each child that includes strategies used in the program that can be utilized both in school and in the home environment.

**Follow-Up Meetings with Parents and Education Teams**, the critical next step in the program. We work directly with and train district personnel (teachers, therapists, aides, etc.) to ensure a smooth transition into school that incorporates inclusion whenever possible.

**Ongoing Assistance:** New in 2019-2020, DSCBA is implementing a warm hand-off of each child and their educational team from CRP staff to our director of education, who will work with school administrators to schedule teacher trainings through our popular Down Syndrome Education Alliance (DSEA) program.

## RESULTS

Participants used multiple modes of communication during CRP, including combinations of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), speech, gestures, and facial expressions to communicate. CRP staff utilized diagnostic intervention to determine



***Johanna is using a GoTalk9+ during an interactive reading activity where she reads the names of her classmates.***

various communication systems and strategies and then obtain information on the communication skills and improvements of each participant.

All participants demonstrated new skills in communication using these modalities, with many increasing their use of speech and improving their speech intelligibility. Participants also increased their literacy skills, such as being able to identify letters, numbers, and words. Participants also improved their social skills and ability to listen and respond to directions.

Participants were provided with a variety of low-to high-tech communication devices, including Step-by-Step communicators, a Talking Block with pre-recorded phrases, GoTalk 9s, and iPads with communication apps such as TouchChat, ProLoQuo2Go, GoTalkNow, and Pictello.

Low-tech communication boards were loaded with common icons used during CRP and at home, environmental scripts and supports (e.g. open door sign, bathroom, equity sticks), and activity-based sequencing boards (e.g. throw away trash, put away lunch, wipe placemat, etc.)



## Parent Feedback



**Walter gives a “high five” after correctly answering a question.**

**“He has gotten much better at saying ‘I want... please.’ Prior to CRP he needed much more prompting to say it. Now he sometimes says it all on his own and otherwise with a slight prompt, he says each word clearly.”**

“I have noticed an increase in Saige’s vocabulary as well as her intelligibility. We have had many family members and friends comment on her progress as well. As she has started back to school, she is doing a much better job with the routine of the school day. Her aide said she noticed a difference even after two days back.”

“Braeden is fully included in the staggered day kindergarten at our neighborhood school. After the end of his staggered day, he goes to the SDC for his focused goal work.

This summer, Braeden participated in the DSCBA Communication Readiness Program. At the end of the program, they meet with the kids’ parents and go over the strategies they developed over the six weeks to support them in school. Then they meet with the kids’ education teams to share those strategies to encourage success.

I am optimistic about his inclusion because of the support of the other parents and professionals at the DSCBA that help me fight for Braeden’s educational success.”

“I cannot stress how wonderful this program is. I hope that if we ever do have to move away from the Bay Area, I can meet with you to discuss how to bring this program to other Down syndrome support groups in other areas. Perhaps you all should create an open-source model that other groups and networks can pull from to create their own CRPs for children in their area.”

“I learned a lot about being flexible in the classroom. Every day was a different obstacle for us to conquer. We had to meet with the staff and work together to decide what is best for each student.”

- SLP Student Intern

“I loved my experience as an intern for CRP. The staff was so supportive and gave us a lot of freedom in lesson planning and materials. I really learned a lot about working with the Down syndrome population and being in front of a classroom. I believe I gained many skills that I can apply to my future career as a speech-language pathologist.”

- SLP Student Intern



*Emery has fun crawling through the tunnel in the obstacle course. The use of obstacle courses builds gross and fine motor skills, as well as cognitive, comprehension, and problem-solving skills.*

## Ongoing Assistance and the DSEA

## Thank You to Our CRP 2019 Funders & Partners!

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...And all of DSCBA's donors who support us through our two annual fundraisers and special donations, and our amazing crew of volunteers. Thank you!

So far this fall, more than half the school teams in each of our 16 participants' school districts have been visited by our director of education, Elizabeth Lewis, and the remaining are scheduled. We have already provided these follow-up services that were discussed during our meetings:

- An on-site Numicon training for ten educators.
- An on-site consult that covered best practices, behavior and communication strategies, and modifications and accommodations training for 24 educators.
- Ability Awareness presentations for more than 500 students.

In addition, we have partnered with one CRP student's school to provide four on-site staff training sessions and an on-site consult on communication strategies to support students with Down syndrome.

If you would like more information about CRP or to schedule a consultation, please contact Elizabeth Lewis, Director of Education, at 925.362.8660.