



## Make coaching easier! How four Hanen SLP/Ts are creatively using the Parent Workbook

**By Cindy Conklin, Program Director, *It Takes Two to Talk*®**

One of the best parts of my job as the program director of *It Takes Two to Talk* (ITTT) is connecting with members – like yourself - to find out about how you are using the ITTT strategies and coaching principles in your work with families. These conversations are so important and always include your feedback about what we can do here at Hanen to further support your clinical practice. Resoundingly, many of you have said that you want more ITTT resources that you can use flexibly with families in a variety of clinical contexts.

We hear you!

The ITTT parent workbook was developed to help meet your needs, making it easier for you to involve parents as key players in their child's early language intervention. It is based on the information from the *It Takes Two to Talk* guidebook and is filled with checklists, activities and home plans for parents to complete. Under your guidance and coaching, parents use the activities in the workbook to create 'a personalized intervention diary' for their child. Parents say they love being able to see the changes in their child because they have documented their child's progress throughout their workbook – and *you* say that you love that parents can see the changes in *themselves* and how this is impacting their child!

Many of you have also told me that one of the most helpful things about the workbook is how you can use the observation guides and checklists to help parents identify what their child is doing *now* – so that you can talk to them about what to expect their child to do *next*. In this way, you are using the activities in the workbook to increase parent's awareness of their child's current abilities so that you can involve them and talk to them about their child's 'next steps' or 'goals' in the areas of interaction, language, play and book skills.

But don't take my word for it! Read about how your fellow members are using the *It Takes Two to Talk* parent workbook in different ways to support families on their caseloads. You'll read about Nancy Johnson and her team in British Columbia who are using the

workbook in 1:1 coaching sessions with families, as well as, Edwin Lawrence and his team who are using the workbook during home visits with families in Malaysia. Learn about how Tracy Rait-Parkes used the workbook in a small parent-child playgroup, and how Kelly Millar uses the workbook in an approved, adapted *It Takes Two to Talk* program.

If you would like to share how *you* are using the parent workbook in your own clinical practice, please join the Hanen discussion forum. We'd love to keep the conversation going and share ideas with you.

Happy reading!

Cindy

---

## Using the Parent Workbook in 1:1 Sessions with Families

Nancy Johnson is a speech-language pathologist in British Columbia, Canada, with extensive experience in working with young children and their families. She is a Hanen instructor and long-time Hanen member, who uses *It Takes Two to Talk* resources in her clinical work with families, as well as offering *It Takes Two to Talk* Programs as part of the clinical services offered to clients at her workplace, Ridge Meadows Child Development Centre.

This is what Nancy had to say about using the ITTT Parent Workbook in her individual coaching sessions with families as part of her service delivery model:

### The initial family consultation

During our initial consultation with families, the speech-language pathologists observe the young child interacting and playing with their parent. The clinician also interacts directly with the child to identify the child's strengths and needs. The clinician models strategies for the parent and coaches them to use these strategies with their child. Recommendations for service are also provided. Additionally, there are forms to complete and other information to impart, all of which can be overwhelming for parents to process in 75 to 90 minutes. What most parents take away from this initial consultation is the fact that their child will be placed on a wait list for ongoing speech and language services.

At the initial consultation, if a child's communication skills are found to be within the Discoverer to Combiner stages based on the *It Takes Two to Talk* Program (i.e., the child's skills ranged from pre-intentional to combining words together), the full *It Takes Two to Talk* program is recommended and offered to families. Many parents express interest in participating in the program and then wait until the next available program is offered. Other families are interested but, for several different reasons, are not able to participate in the full program. Several parents do not have regular child care that would allow them to participate in an evening program, others work shift work or have transportation challenges.

## Using the ITTT Parent Workbook in 5 individual coaching sessions

If a family is unable to attend the full ITTT program, we now use the ITTT Parent Workbook in individual coaching sessions with families. We are providing 5 individual coaching sessions per family. Both the parent and the child attend each of the sessions. These five sessions can be spaced over 4-5 months, allowing families time to read the material in the *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent Guidebook, to complete the checklists and home plans in the Parent Workbook and practice specific strategies with their child. Parents purchase the Parent Workbook from our organization and we loan them the *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent Guidebook.

### Session 1

The first coaching session focuses on Part 1 of the Parent Workbook. Together, the speech-language pathologist and the parent identify the child's stage of communication. The parent also completes the FOCUS © (Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six), authored by Thomas- Stonell, N., Oddson, B., Robertson, B., Walker, J., & Rosenbaum, (2012) and the speech-language pathologist completes the *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent-Child Observation Form to get a clear picture of both the child and the parent's communicative behaviours – and how these two styles affect each other. The observations guided by this form help our clinicians choose goals for the child and select strategies to teach the parent so that he or she can support the child's goals.

### Session 2

The strategies of OWL and Follow Your Child's Lead are covered in the second coaching session.

### Sessions 3-5

In the last three sessions, the speech-language pathologist selects the strategies from Parts 2 -5 in the Parent Workbook that are determined to be most helpful for the child in terms of her/his communication stage and style, as well as for that particular parent. This could include more time spent on helping the parent build interaction with their child or it could include spending time on specific language goals. It may also include time spent on other skills such as the child's play and book skills.

At the end of the 5 coaching sessions, the parent completes the FOCUS© again and changes in the child's communication skills are documented and discussed. In addition, the speech-language pathologist completes the ITTT Parent-Child Observation Form again to note changes in the child's interaction and language skills, as well as changes in the parent's use of strategies since the intervention began.

## How the Parent Workbook supports our individual coaching sessions

### Involving parents in their child's goal setting

To date, we have found the Parent Workbook to be a valuable resource to support individualized parent-implemented intervention. Using the Parent Workbook, parents have been able to be actively involved in identifying their child's language stage and subsequently choose specific goals for their child. Going through the Child's Stage of Communication Checklist in the workbook together with parents has allowed us to clarify more specifically what the child is currently doing and has helped parents to have a better

understanding of what the 'next step' is for their child. For example, if the child is at the Communicator stage for Expression and has limited gestures, we can help the parent identify specifically which gestures their child is and is not yet using, giving them suggestions as to what other gestures they may need to model for their child.

### **Introducing content and strategies flexibly to parents**

Being able to individualize the content and strategies for each child and family was found to be the most satisfying for the parents and the speech-language pathologists. It allows us to respond to the individual needs of the parents and focus on the areas that are most relevant for their child. In one situation, the parent identified in the second session that her daughter enjoyed books and she chose book time as one activity for her home plan. This parent was able to move to Part 5 in the Parent Workbook and, with some coaching, incorporate the information right away with her daughter.

### **Parent checklists, home plans and reflection on progress**

Parents reported that the Parent Workbook complements the information from the guidebook and allows them to individualize the information to their own family. Parents found the workbook easy to read and liked having the checklists and home plans all together. Having examples was noted to be very useful, as well as the wrap up component at the end of the different sections, which allowed them to reflect not only on changes in their child, but also changes in themselves.

### **Incorporating the Hanen 4P coaching cycle**

The nature of the sessions have been reported to be relaxed, conversational, and personalized. Using the 4P cycle provides a structure to the session and allows the individual child's goals to be achieved. Coaching the parents 'on-line' in a real life situations was also very helpful. Having the children present during the coaching sessions provided "real time" opportunities for demonstration, parent guided practice and problem solving.

### **Time between coaching sessions**

Spacing the sessions out allowed the parents time to practice the individualized strategies as they learned them and gradually integrate subsequent strategies as they progressed. Knowing that we had these five opportunities to meet up with each family also gave the speech-language pathologist the time to adequately teach the strategies and not overwhelm parents with too much information at once. Typically the individual visits lasted one hour using the 4P cycle. Our wish for future sessions is to incorporate video feedback into these individual sessions, extending the length of each session. One parent mentioned, for example, difficulty reflecting on her interaction in the moment, highlighting the value of implementing video feedback during the session.

### **Our final word on the Parent Workbook**

Utilizing the *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent Workbook individually with families is still relatively new to our service delivery model. However, the children and parents who have completed the five coaching sessions have made changes based on the FOCUS© and on the Parent-Child Observation Form. The Workbook provided a framework for sharing information and teaching strategies in a more individualized, concrete and organized approach. The feedback from both the speech-language pathologists and the parents is that the Parent Workbook is a very effective and positive addition to the services our

centre offers. It has allowed us to engage with families and address the child's communication needs in a more efficient and timely manner.

## References

Thomas-Stonell, N., Robsertson, B., Oddson, B., Washington, K. & Rosenbaum, P. (2012) FOCUS©: Focus On the Outcomes Under Six. Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Toronto, Ontario, Canada..

---

## Using the Parent Workbook in 1:1 Sessions with Families

Edwin Lawrence is a speech-language pathologist and director of Speech Therapy Answers in Malaysia. Read about how Edwin and his team are using the ITTT Parent Workbook during home visits with families:

We, at Speech Therapy Answers, provide speech and language pathology assessment and intervention services at our clients' homes. After the initial assessment is completed and goals are identified, we start our intervention. We most often use a few *It Takes Two to Talk* resources with families, including the parent guidebook, companion DVD and parent workbook.

I use the ITTT Workbook with most of our parents. It's well structured and follows my personal therapeutic protocol well. The workbook is set up in a way that is both simple and technical – depending on your background. As an SLP, it is theoretically sound and I can see how it was developed from a theoretical perspective. I tend to use the workbook in a progressive manner with families. However, in some situations, we need to jump ahead to a more relevant section in the workbook, like the section on 'play' or 'books', especially if the child has received speech therapy in the past.

The workbook makes the parent guidebook more tangible and provides easy reference to new concepts and strategies for parents. It provides the parent with clear goals and shows them what to do to support these goals during interactions with their child within simple, everyday situations. As a clinician, I find the workbook helpful because I have something tangible to refer to when I provide a demonstration or explanation to parents.

I think what parents like most about the workbook is that it makes it easier to work with their own child, something they didn't think was possible before they started this kind of intervention.

I would highly recommend this resource to SLPs working with parents using a child-centred approach to improve children's language, communication, literacy and cognitive skills. I would urge SLPs to consider incorporating the workbook into their current intervention when using the *It Takes Two to Talk* Guidebook and DVD.



## Using the Parent Workbook in a Parent-Child Playgroup

Tracy Rait-Parkes is a Hanen Instructor and speech-language pathologist working for the Language Express, Preschool Speech Language Services in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Counties in Ontario, Canada. She primarily offers Hanen programs to young children with a wide variety of communication delays and their families.

This is what Tracy had to say about using the parent workbook in a small parent-child playgroup that she ran:

At our agency we had been waiting patiently to receive the new *It Takes Two to Talk* (ITTT) Parent Workbook from the Hanen Centre. We have been offering Hanen programs and using our Hanen resources in clinical work for years, and the workbook looked like it was going to be a great addition to our toolbox! Around the time the workbook came out, we were scheduled to run an ITTT program, but we only had two families who were able to participate. We knew that these two moms and their sons (early communicators who had both already been diagnosed with a developmental delay that was impacting their communication skills) would really benefit from learning the content of ITTT in a group setting. Undaunted, we thought this would be a great opportunity to offer a parent-child group intervention that suited the needs of these two families - while giving the new workbook a try.

We planned an intervention of nine sessions spread over a 12 week block of service.

### **Our intervention consisted of:**

- A. An initial family consultation conducted individually with each child and parent.
- B. 6 in-clinic mini-group sessions in which the moms and their sons attended. These sessions were run by the Hanen SLP (me). Group sessions were 1 ½ hours in length and topics for each session followed the content of the parent workbook. Parents were asked to read content from the ITTT guidebook before each session and then group time was spent demonstrating strategies in play (with people games, songs, books and toys) and daily routines (during snack time and getting dressed to go home). Parents got to watch clips from the ITTT companion DVD of the strategies being used with children similar to their own and there were lots of opportunities for the moms to practice and get feedback from the Hanen SLP.
- C. 2 individual consultation sessions with each family using video feedback.

The *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent Workbook turned out to be an invaluable way for these two mothers to personalize the information they were learning at our mini-group sessions. We discussed the strategies as they were practising them in the clinic and talked about how they would use them at home. The Home Plan pages provided a perfect place for the parents (or the Hanen SLP, when parents had their hands full!) to record plans for a home activity. Each mom also used the “Report from Home” page to report back on how home activities turned out. In addition, during video feedback sessions, the mothers used the Wrap-Up pages in the workbook to track changes they were seeing in themselves and their sons as well as to plan next steps.

As a Hanen SLP, I liked the organization that the workbook provided for my group sessions as well as the flexibility I had in choosing the strategies best suited to these particular clients. Parents really liked having one place where strategies, suggestions and plans were kept, especially after coming home from a busy parent-child group. Both mothers reported that the workbook gave them the chance to review the information at their own pace and check back on how they were planning on using the strategies at home. I am looking forward to using the ITTT parent workbook in my next parent-child group intervention!

## Using the Parent Workbook in an Approved, Adapted ITTT Program

Kelly Millar is a speech-language pathologist working for a preschool language system in Lanark County in Ontario, Canada. She serves children who are 0 – 5 years of age in a rural catchment area. She sees children with a variety of speech, language, social-pragmatic and global delays. She provides service primarily in a clinic setting but also sees children in their natural environments as needed (daycare, home, school).

This is what Kelly had to say about using the Parent Workbook in an approved, adapted *It Takes Two to Talk* Program:

This past spring I participated in a Hanen e-seminar about the *It Takes Two to Talk* Parent Workbook. During that seminar, many new ideas were put forward about how to use the workbook with families. Afterwards, a co-worker told me that she was noticing a large gap in her toddler groups between parents who had already had a Hanen program and those who had not. We put our heads together, applied to Hanen for approval for an adapted *It Takes Two to Talk* program and voila, our *It Takes Two to Talk* adapted program was born!

**Our adapted *It Takes Two to Talk* program includes the following components:**

**A. A pre-program consultation with each family.**

B. 4 group, parent-only training sessions based on the content from the first 4 sessions of the full, *It Takes Two to Talk* program.

C. 2 individual video feedback sessions with each family.

D. 3 parent-child group coaching sessions in which all the parents come with their children and have an opportunity to further practice the strategies with their child while receiving 'online coaching'.

Here is a sample schedule of our adapted program:

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Pre-program consultation                       | <b>Parent and Child</b>               |
| <b>Session 1</b> "Build Interaction"           | Parents only                          |
| <b>Session 2</b> "Follow your child's lead"    | Parents only                          |
| <b>Individual Coaching</b> with Video Feedback | <b>Parent and Child</b>               |
| <b>Group Coaching Session</b>                  | <b>All Parents and their Children</b> |
| <b>Session 3</b> "Turns"                       | Parents only                          |
| <b>Individual Coaching</b> with Video Feedback | <b>Parent and Child</b>               |
| <b>Group Coaching Session</b>                  | <b>All Parents and their Children</b> |
| <b>Session 4</b> "Add Language"                | Parents only                          |
| <b>Group Coaching Session</b>                  | <b>All Parents and their Children</b> |

By using this structure, the parents were able to first learn the strategies with other parents in the group sessions and go home and try them out with their child. Then, by coming to the video feedback sessions they were able to 'see' themselves applying the strategies



during interactions with their child and, with our help, make modifications that would support their child to achieve specific communication goals. Parents then received additional practice and 'online' coaching when they came to the group coaching sessions.

The *It Takes Two to Talk* parent workbook is an integral part of this program. It is used in all of the different contexts. During the parent-only evening sessions, parents are able to individualize the information that is provided by completing questionnaires and checklists about their child in their workbooks. Then, they make a home plan filled with strategies for encouraging interaction and language in activities that their child likes to do at home.

When the parents come to the individual coaching sessions, the workbook serves as a great tool to review and decide on what will be video-taped that day. It also gives us a great framework for talking about things like play, pretending, sharing books, and music (these things are not formally talked about in the adapted program, but are covered in the workbook). Finally, the parents use their workbooks to come up with a plan of what they will work on during the upcoming group coaching session.

The parents rated the workbook among the highest in terms of all the elements in the program. They liked being able to work through it during the evening sessions and then have it to quickly review at home. They also liked that it provided a "one stop shop" for ideas, helpful hints, activities and goals. They knew that a quick look through (even in midst of an activity with their child) could provide the information they needed at the moment.

Parents felt that, through the workbook, they were really able to learn more about their children – their communication, play and interaction style, as well as the strategies that worked the best for them!

---

I hope you enjoyed reading about how Kelly, Tracy, Edwin, and Nancy use the *It Takes Two to Talk*® Parent Workbook in their practices. If you would like to learn more about the Parent Workbook, please visit <http://www.hanen.org/Guidebooks---DVDs/SLPs/It-Takes-Two-to-Talk-Workbook.aspx>

If you would like to order the workbook, please visit <http://www.hanen.org/MyHanen/Shop/Products/It-Takes-Two-To-Talk-Parent-Workbook.aspx>

If you have any questions about the Parent Workbook, or if you would like to share your experiences using the workbook with others, please visit the ITTT Parent Workbook thread on the discussion forum, at <https://www.hanen.org/MyHanen/Networking/Forums.aspx>

Thanks for reading!

