

Inspiring a Shared Passion

Growing up in Waterloo, Erin Broxterman and Emma Belanger were both familiar with KidsAbility. For Erin, living close to KidsAbility's Waterloo site, she passed by on a regular basis and attended camps such as Arts Express as a peer. For Emma, her journey took her through KidsAbility's front doors at the age of three after her preschool teacher had mentioned to her mom Emma's struggles to communicate clearly.

KidsAbility became a part of Emma's life as a preschooler and her therapist, Norma, worked with her to overcome her speech challenges as a little girl.

Although they wouldn't meet for years, both Erin and Emma's careers followed parallel paths, graduating as Speech-Language Pathologists. As they each looked to the future, their respective thoughts returned to a place that was not only familiar but helped inspire their shared occupation. Erin joined KidsAbility's team in January 2015 and Emma that August.

In 2015, KidsAbility had launched a pilot project alongside Wee Talk, the provider of speech and language therapy in Guelph-Wellington. The project was developed to coordinate services for children with multiple needs who would benefit from a multiple-disciplinary team in one appointment, as opposed to multiple appointments across various organizations. Having been at KidsAbility's Kitchener site, Erin transitioned to Guelph-Wellington that summer to be a part of this exciting pilot project.

The pilot proved a success — something that Erin is incredibly proud of — and provided a coordinated support team for KidsAbility's more complex children. "Working with children in a joint therapy model is my favourite part of this position. It's exciting to learn about other disciplines and to see how the collaboration helps our clients meet their goals," says Erin.

Erin was instrumental in turning the pilot project into a formal program and getting it started. When she went on maternity leave, Emma stepped in to build and grow this program from its infancy to a full caseload. On either end of Erin's maternity leave, she and Emma were able to overlap to ensure that the transition between clinicians went smoothly for each child.

"It only seemed natural when I knew that I wanted to work with preschoolers that I come full circle and return to work at KidsAbility, a couple decades after walking out of the door of the Rotary Centre as a client," says Emma who is quick to point out that her therapist, Norma, became her mentor. "I knew that I wanted to work in an environment where disciplines collaborated, clinicians were supported and clients' needs were forefront."

"It's fun to problem-solve with other therapists and often helpful to have another set of eyes, hands and ears in the room!" says Erin.



Erin Broxterman &
Emma Belanger

Speech-Language Pathologists - KidsAbility