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Rochester Hearing & Speech Center Celebrates 50 Years of Improving Kids Lives Through Their Day Care Speech and Language Program

Rochester, New York - Like so many other efforts throughout the history of improving human services, Rochester Hearing & Speech Center Day Care Speech and Language Program started very small. They are celebrating this program's rich history in April to coincide with the Month of the Young Child.

In 1969, a caregiver at a daycare center (no longer in operation) called Rochester Hearing and Speech Center looking for someone to help her find a speech program for a child in her classroom. Due to limited funds and no access to transportation to take the child to speech therapy appointments, the teacher asked if a speech pathologist could come out to their site to see the child and consult with the caregivers and parents. Although the norm today, in 1969 this had never been done before – and they did it! From there, the Rochester Hearing and Speech Center's Day Care Speech and Language Program were born.

Claire Sischy and Nancy Backman, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center employees began offering their services to various daycare centers in the Rochester area, supported wholeheartedly by the agency's administration and board of directors. The program's initiatives were central to the mission of the agency and it just made sense to reach out to children in need of their services by collaborating with area caregivers.

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center became the first agency in the area to offer on-site community setting services and was a forerunner of the current model for service delivery for preschool children with disabilities. Sischy and Backman provided speech and hearing screenings, consultation with teachers and parents, and in-service training for staff; the same services Rochester Hearing and Speech Center continues to provide 50 years later.

Today, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center partners with more than 20 daycare centers. Oregon-Leopold Day Care Center, Ibero-American Action League, and Asbury Day Care Center were among the first that they visited and are still part of the program today.

Although this program began 50 years ago, it remains relevant and continues to demonstrate its effectiveness in identifying preschool children with speech and language delays and other special needs early in their lives, when intervention can make the most difference.

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Rochester Hearing and Speech Center is committed to helping children and adults develop the skills and abilities necessary to communicate for life. Their goal is to help individuals and those they love to share life's most precious moments by assisting individuals in developing the best possible hearing and speech abilities at every stage of their lives. They are the longest standing and most experienced provider of speech, language and hearing services in Monroe County. The Center is a member of the AI Sigl Community of Agencies with offices in Brighton, Greece, and Webster.