

Economist & Sun • Stouffville Tribune

HEALTH

Officials stress precautions in heat wave

BY LINDA JOHNSON
Staff Writer

It has been a long time since you had such a good excuse not to cut the lawn.

After all, you may just get past the marigolds when you wake up to find yourself at the emergency ward of the local hospital.

When the temperature is 35 and feels like 45, you know it's hot. But it can be difficult to realize how hot it really is.

Or how the heat may affect your health. For many people, sweltering weather is not just uncomfortable, it can quickly become a medical emergency.

Dr. Nalin Ahluwalia, chief of emergency medicine at York Central Hospital, said his department saw a lot of people in last week's heat wave.

"Some of these are heat-related illnesses, but some people have conditions that seem to get worse during a heat wave," he said.

So while doctors treat many cases of sunburn and dehydration, more common are patients who already suffer from respiratory problems, such as asthma.

"The air quality is very bad and many people come in presenting breathing problems. And that's all age groups; children, younger people and the older population. They can be gulping for breath."

He said weather where heat is accompanied by a breeze is more likely to lead to heat stroke because a person may feel cooled by the breeze while body temperature continues to rise.

"Your body's getting hotter, but you don't realize what's going on because you've got a cool breeze," he said.

Dr. Ahluwalia said children are especially prone to heat-related illness and are more likely to suffer dehydration, which can cause their body temperatures to rise.

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Children need strong communication skills to build self-esteem

Clinic makes speech therapy fun

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

When Mark Cardinali first became a patient of Newmarket's Family Speech Clinic last October, he had difficulty pronouncing simple words.

Hardly surprising, given the then three-year-old's hearing loss, which appeared to have been rectified when tiny tubes were surgically implanted in his ears to help them drain properly.

At the time, Mark's mom said she hoped he would be able to articulate one word properly by Christmas.

"We started in October and I thought if he could say one word clearly, it would be such a huge Christmas gift for us," Jeanine Cardinali said.

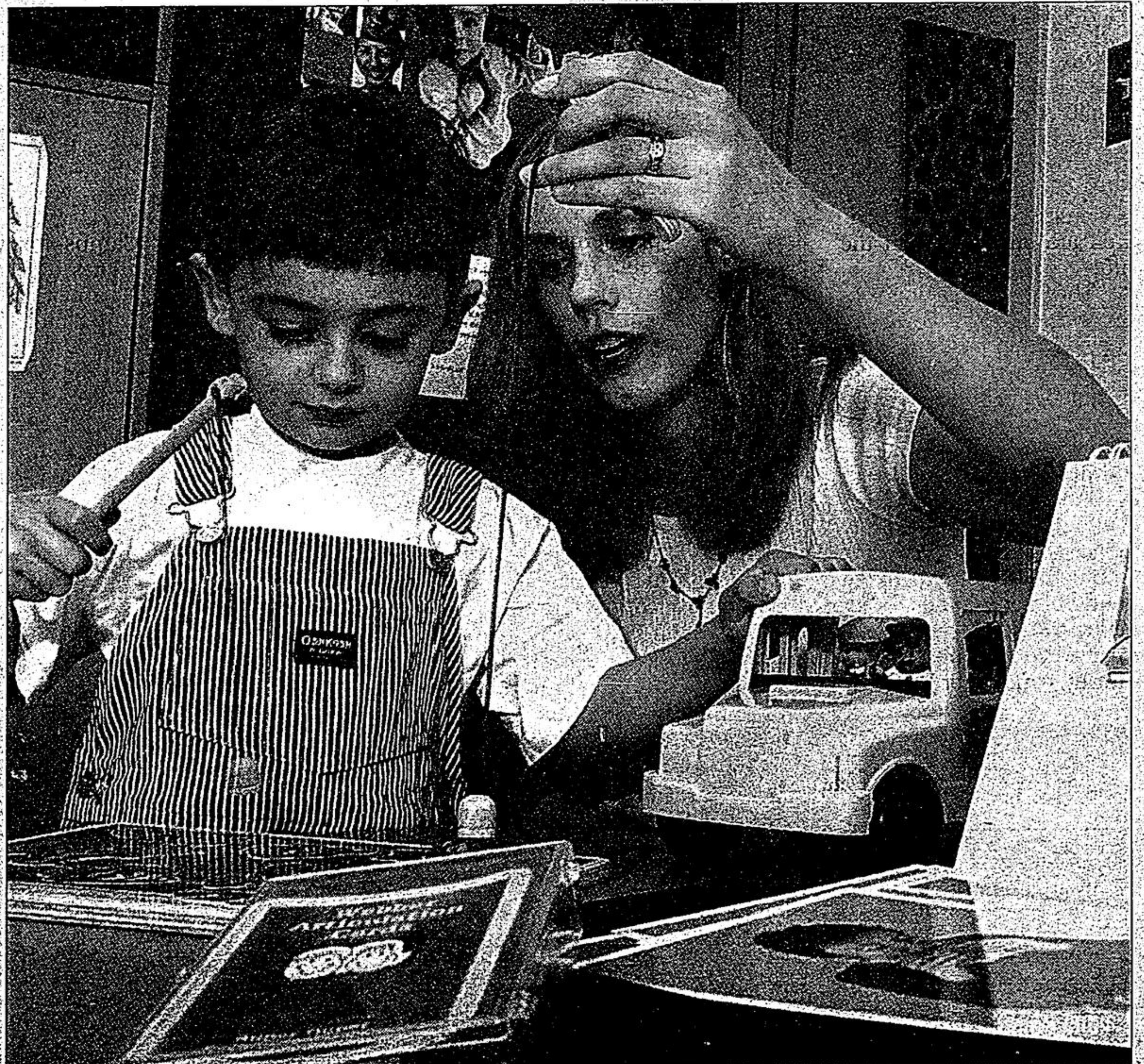
'We're excited that he will have an opportunity for intense speech therapy and it will be a lot of fun. Mark is looking forward to it. He likes camping and singing and having fun with his friends.'

Mark surpassed his parents' expectations by being able to say simple sentences such as "I choose Mickey" and "dress the doll" by year's end.

Although Mark is still working on his speech patterns, his mother is thrilled with the progress he has made in nine months.

But as far as Mark is concerned, going to the clinic isn't work. It's just a place to play with toys, puzzles and games with Beth Cranmer-Smith, who operates the facility.

Ms Cranmer-Smith, a speech-language pathologist who is also a member of Southlake Regional Health Centre's neurological team,



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Beth Cranmer-Smith, a speech-language pathologist who operates Newmarket's Family Speech Clinic, works with Mark Cardinali, 4, to help him learn to enunciate properly through toys and games.

said the play is actually therapy that helps children learn to enunciate properly.

An inability to communicate well can create social barriers for children if not addressed, she said.

"Kids experience a lot of frustration if they can't communicate. What are six-year-olds going to think if one kid is saying 'tat' instead of 'cat'? It can affect that child's self-esteem."

Ms Cranmer-Smith said most academic and health-care professionals agree positive communication skills are linked with intelligence development and school performance.

Stressing early intervention is key, she said children with speech difficulties should receive therapy as early as 18 months.

At the clinic, children usually receive therapy individually, but

this summer they will get a chance to learn and play together at the clinic's day camp, the first of its kind in York Region.

Campers will be doing the same activities as kids at any other camp — singalongs, story time, crafts, sports, drama and show-and-tell.

Activities follow themes such as

See CAMP, page 15.

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