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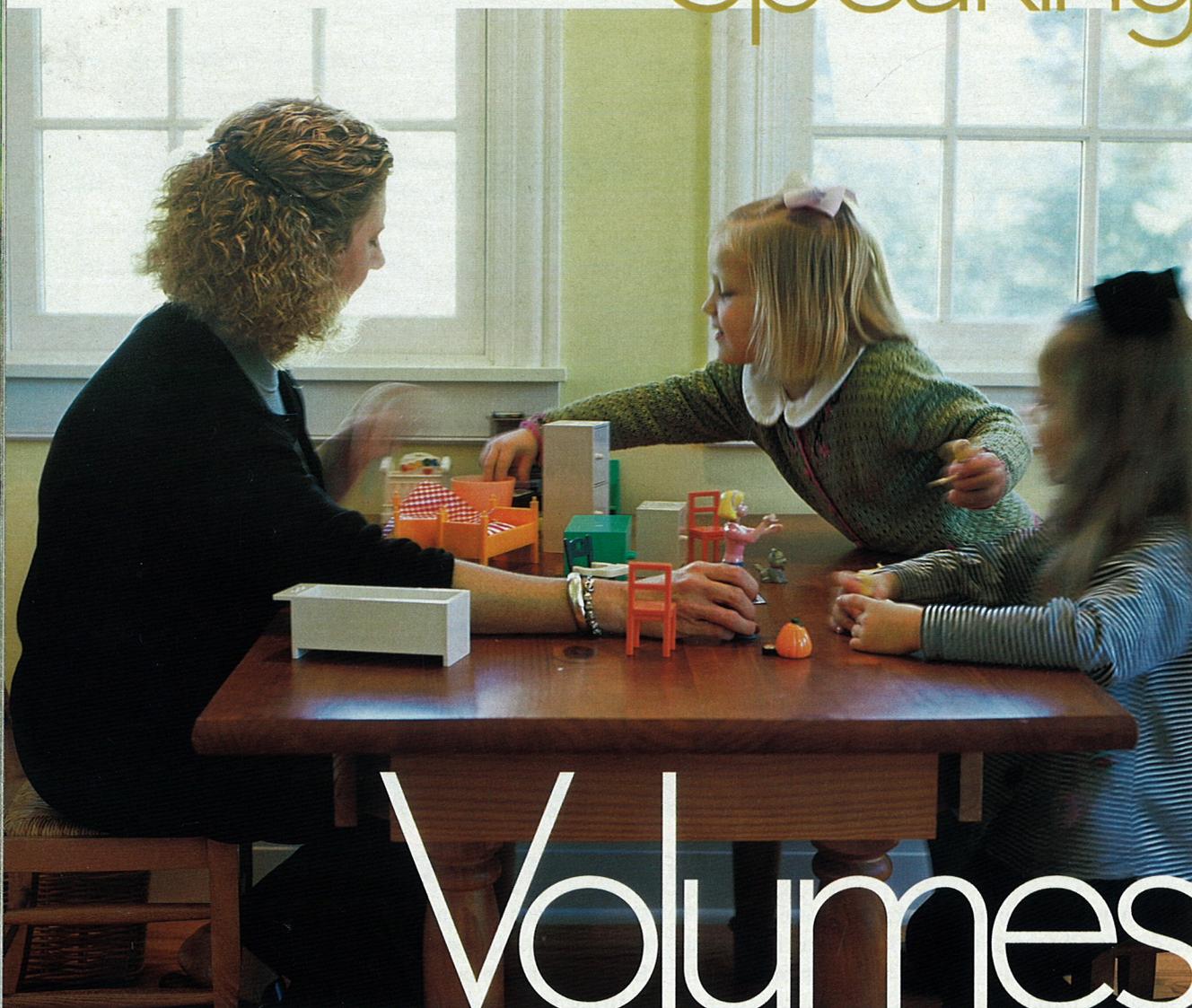
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Speaking



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THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE AT JULIE TRACY'S CHICAGO HOME MAKES THE GRADE FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ATTEND CLASSES THERE, THANKS TO A SUNNY SECOND-STORY ADDITION.

BY SHAWN GILLIAM PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER WALTERS PRODUCED BY HILARY ROSE



WORKING AT HOME >> from 106

Remodeling projects have a funny way of affecting more than just plumbing fixtures and floorboards. For Julie and Michael Tracy, what began as a straightforward exterior facelift turned into a surprising realization of Julie's personal and professional goals. "We were hoping we could have a porch, but somewhere along the way we came up with the idea of a room over the garage,"

Julie says. "About the same time, I started thinking it would be fun if I could have a speech and language practice out of my home, since my kids were at the age where they would be gone all day at school." The Tracys decided to build the kid-friendly room—and soon Julie was welcoming students to learn amid its warmth and her care. >> on 110

The 400-square-foot classroom/playroom (above) built over a garage (right, top) also tied into a new pergola and entry portico. Basset hound Molly (right, bottom) often plays a key role in Julie Tracy's therapeutic work.





WORKING AT HOME >> from 108

Designing a space that felt nothing like school was Julie's top request for architect Fred Wilson. Pale yellow walls reach to a cathedral ceiling and are fitted with a wide arch-top window and three French doors. "It's flooded with light, and the symmetry of the design makes it very comfortable," Wilson says.

The inviting space accommodates specially designed learning stations. Because the children sometimes have trouble organizing themselves and knowing how to play, Julie laid out areas geared toward different lessons and activities. Felt and magnet boards, reading areas, and play centers, such as one set up as a kitchen, accommodate lessons that Julie customizes to the needs of each child. "The children who come here often have difficulty bringing order into their experiences," Julie says. "A space like the kitchen helps them learn how to take a role and represent their daily lives in a play activity."

Closets, shelves, and proximity to a bath in the original house provide the space with a possible future use as a bedroom or family lounge. But for now Julie sees the features as they relate to children—including her own. When class isn't in session, she spends time here with sons John and Joe. "John wanders into this room constantly," she says. "He loves to be in here." 🏠

A short hall (*above*) accesses a 9×20-foot back deck. The door near the kitchen play area (*right*) opens onto a smaller balcony that faces the street.

RESOURCES >> PAGE 280

