

Speech, Language and Hearing Services



Speech-language pathologists are involved in the prevention, identification and treatment of a child's speech, language and hearing disorders in partnership with parents, physicians, educators and health care providers.

Children entering Kindergarten may complete a speech and language screening to identify if there are any problems in the areas listed on this handout. Possible areas of difficulty are assessed in further detail.

Depending on the severity and nature of the problem, Kindergarten children receive speech and language services in pull-out sessions with a speech-language pathologist and/or an educational assistant, and/or as learned skills integrated into regular classroom activities.

In the Kindergarten Classroom

Articulation

Definition: the pronunciation of sounds to make words.

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Is your child easily understood by others?
- Does your child pronounce most sounds except for maybe the 'r', 'v', 'l' and 'th' sounds (they may still have a slight lisp on their 's', 'z', 'sh', 'ch' and 'j' sounds)?
- Does your child substitute one sound for another? (ex. says "tarrot" for "carrot")
- Does your child omit sounds? (ex. says "ca" for "cat")

Fluency (Stuttering)

Definition: the smooth flow of speech.

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Does your child talk too quickly to be understood clearly?
- Does your child repeat words or parts of words?
- Does your child have trouble getting words or ideas out?
- Does your child show an unusual amount of tension or anxiety when speaking?

Voice

Definition: appropriate quality, pitch and volume of a speaker's voice relative to their age, gender and environment.

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Does your child talk using a voice pitch that sounds too high or too low for his age, gender and stature?
- Does your child's voice sound hoarse, breathy or cracking?
- Does your child "talk through his nose" or sound like he has a "stuffy nose" all the time?
- Does your child ever lose his voice after extended periods of talking?

Receptive Language

Definition: a child's understanding of language

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Is your child able to follow 2 and 3 step verbal directions?
- Does your child appear confused and copy from others?
- Does your child respond appropriately to questions?
- Does the child appear to have a short attention span?

Expressive Language

Definition: a child's use of language

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Is your child using sentences that can be more than 5 to 6 words long?
- Does your child use appropriate grammar, such as pronouns (I, you, me, she, he, we), question words (what, who, where, why, how), plurals (cats, toys), possessives (the boy's, the clown's), and the present, future and past tense (walks, walked, will walk)?
- Can your child retell a story by naming characters and talking about what happened?



Language Processing Skills

Definition: The ability to organize and store words and information.

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Does your child understand and use many words?
- Can your child explain how an object is used?
- Can your child group items into categories (animals, tools, food)?
- Can your child describe an item?
- Can your child identify things that are the same and different between two objects?

Phonological Awareness Skills

Definition: The awareness that words are made up of sounds and that these sounds can be moved around and manipulated.

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Can your child clap out how many words are in a sentence?
- Can your child clap out the beat of a word (ex. but-ter-fly)?
- Can your child identify rhymes (do cat and hat rhyme?) and produce rhymes (ex. what rhymes with cat)?
- Can your child identify the first sound in a word (ex. hat starts with the 'h' sound).

Hearing Loss

Definition: inability or reduced ability to hear the sounds in a child's environment

Aids to Identifying a Problem:

- Does your child have frequent ear aches?
- Does your child have discharge from the ears?
- Does your child complain of "noise" in the ears?
- Does your child habitually speak too loudly or too softly?
- Does your child appear inattentive during discussions?
- Does your child appear unaware when spoken to, if they are not watching the speaker?
- Does your child make frequent mistakes in following verbal directions, or watches others begin a task and copy them?
- Does your child make frequent requests for repetition of words?

If you have any concerns or if your child has already received speech and language services in the past, please let your Kindergarten teacher know.