

Speech and Language Impairments

Definition:

Speech and language impairments affect a person's communication skills. "Speech impairments include articulation/phonology disorders, voice disorders, or fluency disorders" and language impairments occur "when there is a disorder or delay in the development of comprehension and/or the uses of spoken or written language and/or other symbol systems (Idaho Special Education Manual 2001, September, Pages 53 - 57).

Incidence Rate:

10%

It is estimated that communication disorders affect one in every 10 people in the United States.

Resources:

Introduction to Special Education, Teaching in an Age of Opportunity by Deborah Deutsch Smith, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

This book provides information on special education, IEP's, numerous disabilities, their descriptions, history, prevalence, causes and prevention, educational interventions and technology.

Idaho Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Website

<http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/>

This website contains the Idaho Special Education Manual 2001 in PDF format which can be downloaded and viewed or printed. The site also includes resource links, a report to the legislature and an assistive technology guide for teachers.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Website

<http://www.asha.org/index.cfm>

This website focuses on the specific impairment of speech, language and hearing. The site contains an enormous amount of resources available such as support groups, information packets, development, expert locator, legislative actions, data and research, money information such as grants and funding, career information, and information for both adults and children with speech, language or hearing disorders.

KidSource Online website

<http://www.kidsource.com/NICHCY/speech.html>

This site provides an overview of speech and language disorders, the incidence, characteristics, educational implications, and links to organizations.

Apraxia Kids Website

<http://www.apraxia-kids.org/slps/luckerlazerson.html>

This site provides information about oral-motor planning deficits (apraxia and dyspraxia), articulation disorders, phonological processing deficits and characteristics of each disorder.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS Fact Sheet Number 11 (FS11), 1998

NICHCY National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

http://wash.k12.mi.us/~perform/Speech_&_Language_Impaired.htm#sifactsheet

This website provides a fact sheet that gives an overview of speech and language disorders as well as links to related sites.

Speech Therapy And Accent Reduction Services Website

<http://members.aol.com/msabbara/staars/home.htm>

This website provides information about Articulation/Phonology Disorders, Articulation/Phonology Disorders, Articulation/Phonology Disorders, and Language Disorders. It includes information about assessment, helpful hints, and case studies.

Voice Disorder

Definition: Voice disorders are difficulties with the pitch, loudness, and quality of the voice. Voice disorders are divided into two categories: organic voice disorders and functional voice disorders. Organic voice disorders stem from disease and pathology. Organic voice disorders require medical intervention. Functional voice disorders result from abuse or misuse of the voice. Functional voice disorders can often be managed by voice therapy.

Recommended Accommodations:

- Give the person plenty of water to drink.
- Humidify the room.
- Allow the person to rest the voice as much as possible.
- *throat*

Incidence Rate:

It is estimated that communication disorders affect one in every 10 people in the United States. Within the student population, 4% have a voice disorder.

Description of Manifestations:

- The voice is chronically hoarse, harsh, breathy or of poor quality.
- The voice is always too loud or soft.
- The pitch is inappropriate for the child's age or sex.
- Pitch breaks occur frequently.
- The voice is hyponasal or hypernasal.

Unique Issues:

While some children are diagnosed with a voice disorder and require medical intervention, others may require something as simple as voice therapy. It is often thought that this disorder may be over surveyed, especially when considering the fact that children do have the ability to grow out of this disorder.

Articulation

Description:

Articulation is classified under Speech Impairments and is considered to be a disability when a person produces sounds, syllables, or words incorrectly so that listeners do not understand what is being said. Listeners will start to pay more attention to the way the words sound instead of what the speaker is trying to communicate.

Accommodations:

The best result for recovery or improvement from an articulation problem is early assistance. Some of this extra help can come in the form of speech therapy, specialized teaching, and educational tools. This also includes the aid of a sign language interpreter, pictures/symbols, books on tape, and any form of special education software.

Incidence:

Articulation problems account for 47% of the Speech and Language Impairments

Characteristics / Manifestations:

Most articulation errors fall into one of these categories:

- Omissions—The child will emit sounds that are too hard to say. For example, they will say “at” for “hat” or “oo” for “shoe.”
- Substitution—The child will, for example, use “w” instead of “r,” which will make “rabbit” sound like “wabbit.”
- Addition—This occurs when an extra sound is added to a word, for instance, “galue” instead of “glue.”
- Distortion—This is when a sound is said inaccurately, but sounds something like the intended sound.

The following are some of the causes for articulation problems:

- Faulty learning
- Hearing loss
- Structural Differences
- Neurology

Unique Issues:

You need to be careful when diagnosing a Speech Impairment. It is normal for children to have trouble with language up until around the age of 6.

Fluency Impairment

❖ **Description:** A fluency disorder is the abnormal flow of verbal expression characterized by impaired rate and rhythm, which may be accompanied by struggle behavior.

❖ **Accommodations:**

- Modifications of assignments such as one-to-one presentation
- Use of computer with voice syntax
- Substitutions for oral class report

The student may speak slower in class and should be given time to express his/her thoughts. Interrupting or completing a sentence for the student is not helpful and may lead to embarrassment. It is appropriate to ask the student to repeat the statement. Summarizing the message helps the student check for accuracy of understanding. The instructor's acceptance and support of the student is important to facilitate communication and manage the speech disorder. If an oral presentation is required, the instructor should discuss alternatives with the student.

❖ **Incidence:** Approximately 19% of the population in the United States suffers from some form and level of fluency disorder, predominantly stuttering.

❖ **Manifestations:**

- **Sound and Syllable Repetitions** – Commonly known as stuttering.
- **Sound Prolongation** – Could be described as a drawl, dragging out the sounds of certain letter combinations...most often vowel sounds.
- **Blocks** – Inability to form certain letter combinations
- **Excess Tension in the Speech Musculature** – extreme tensing of muscles

❖ **Unique Issues:** In most cases, the disorder can be treated, and many times completely fixed with the aid of a speech pathologist. In addition, one form of treatment commonly used is a computer program that tracks the rate of flow of the client, and records progress.

Language Disabilities

Definition: Delayed or deviant development of comprehension and or use of signs and symbols to express or receive ideas in a spoken, written, or other symbol system.

Form: The rule system in oral language is referred to as Form.

- Phonology is the sound system of language
- Syntax determines where a word is placed in a sentence
- Morphology governs the parts of words that form basic elements of meaning and the structure of words

Accommodations:

- Create opportunities for children to interact and use language while they learn academic tasks
- Give students experience in talking about different subjects to different audiences
- Allow students to retell the meaning of difficult reading passages
- Always consider the developmental stages of each student
- Incorporate activities in class that allow children with language impairments to practice skills mastered in therapy
- Use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast meanings and characteristics of two concepts
- Use script and story framework to organize knowledge around expected sequences of familiar events

Incident rate: 4.7% of all school age children suffer from a language disability.

Manifestation:

Aphasia: Loss or impairment of language ability due to brain injury.

Otitis media: Middle ear infection that can result in hearing loss, communication impairments, or learning disabilities if it becomes a chronic condition.

Language delay: Development of language skills that is slower than in the majority of peers; may signal language that will require assistance of a specialist to use language proficiently.

Language-different: Children who are not native English speakers and those who speak nonstandard English and do not have impairment though their language is not typical.

Unique issues: Some types of language impairments can be prevented today. Most of these have a medical basis, and preventive measures for these problems are needed prior to the birth of the baby. For example, polio and rubella can have devastating effects on an unborn baby; proper immunization protect adults and children from these and other diseases. Proper prenatal care is important to the development and health of babies.