

*Many Helpful
Resources are
Available for
Parents, Guardians
and Educators by
Contacting:*

- Your school district Speech - Language-Specialist
- Your district's Department of Special Education or child study team
- Your district's Special Education Parent Advisory Group
- NJSHA's School Affairs Committee at info@njsha.org

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Speech-Language-Hearing Association**
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**HOW
SPEECH-LANGUAGE
SPECIALISTS HELP
CHILDREN**



Do you know preschoolers who started speaking later than expected or cannot be understood by people outside of the home?

Do you know older children who have difficulty reading, writing, understanding directions, answering questions and explaining ideas?

Do you know children who have trouble communicating due to physical impairments such as hearing loss, cleft palate or cerebral palsy?

Do you know children who experience trouble swallowing, sucking or chewing?

If so, you know children who should be evaluated by a speech-language specialist.

What Do Speech-Language Specialists Do?

Speech-language specialists work with children — preschool through grade 12 — to evaluate listening comprehension, speaking and pre-literacy language skills to determine if their ability to communicate is typical, delayed or disordered. If there is a communication problem, speech-language specialists will help develop and implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) based on each child's needs.

**The earlier a
communication
difficulty is diagnosed
and treated, the
better success a child
will have in school
and in life.**

What Areas Do Speech-Language Specialists Evaluate?

Speech-Language Specialists Evaluate and Treat Children in Four Areas of Communication

1 ARTICULATION/PHONOLOGY

Are children difficult to understand when compared to other children their age? They may:

- substitute certain sounds for others
- omit, distort or add sounds
- sound unclear and may not be understood
- display weak/uncoordinated oral-motor movements

2 FLUENCY

Do children have difficulty speaking with ease? They may:

- avoid talking
- seem tense or get “stuck” when speaking
- speak too quickly or slowly
- hesitate, prolong or repeat sounds, syllables, words or phrases
- make unexpected facial expressions or gestures when speaking

3 VOICE

Are children’s voices unexpected for their age, gender or stature? They may frequently:

- speak in too high or low a pitch
- speak too loudly or softly
- sound as if they always have a cold
- sound hypernasal (excessively nasal)
- have a hoarse or harsh voice
- run out of air when speaking
- lose their voices

4 LANGUAGE

Do children show signs of a language disorder? They may have:

- unexpected social communication skills
- difficulty following directions
- trouble expressing their ideas when speaking or in writing
- the ability to comfortably speak at home, yet seem to be unable to speak in school

If you know any children who regularly demonstrate one or more of the above conditions or feeding, it may be beneficial to arrange to have them evaluated by a speech-language specialist.

How Do Speech-Language Specialists Help Children Communicate Better?

Speech-language specialists assess and diagnose communication problems on a case-by-case basis in order to create and implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). As students progress, speech-language specialists monitor, reevaluate and revise the services provided as needed or determined by the IEP team. Eligible students of all ages may receive speech-language pathology services.

Speech-Language Specialists may collaborate with:

Parents – to help to explore student needs and receive guidance on how they can support their child’s communication goals.

Teachers – to support appropriate communication skills within the classroom.

Administrators – to design, review and/or enhance communication and literacy programs and provide in-service workshops.

School nurses – when hearing or other medical conditions (e.g., “dysphagia”- feeding or swallowing difficulties) may impact communication.

Audiologists – about treatment/ accommodations that are required due to hearing and/or auditory processing deficits.

Other professionals (e.g., guidance counselors, learning consultants, physicians, dentists, psychologists and social workers) — to create an appropriate treatment program.



How Can Parents Arrange for Children to Be Evaluated?

Parents should send a request for a speech-language evaluation, in writing, to the school principal, child study team or the district Director of Special Education. The district must schedule a meeting to determine the need for an evaluation within 20 days of receiving the written request. Parents have this right according to federal and state regulations.

These same regulations protect the rights of children who have been found to have speech-language challenges. Eligible children are entitled to receive special services (according to their IEP) to improve their ability to communicate at appropriate age and cognitive levels and meet the current New Jersey curriculum standards.