

Policy and Procedures for Speech Telepractice Services

Speech Provider follows the regulations for speech language services of the Minnesota Department of Education and the school-specific policies and procedures in which our SLP's serve. A summary includes the following:

Eligibility for Speech Language Services

For speech and language disabilities, there are separate eligibility criteria for four areas: language disorder, articulation disorder, voice disorder, and fluency disorder as defined by Minnesota Rule 3525.1343, subp. 1-4 as follows:

Definition of a Speech or Language Impairment

Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Fluency Disorder

1. Definition of a Fluency Disorder
"Fluency disorder" means the intrusion or repetition of sounds, syllables, and words; prolongations of sounds; avoidance of words; silent blocks; or inappropriate inhalation, exhalation, or phonation patterns. These patterns may also be accompanied by facial and body movements associated with the effort to speak. Fluency patterns that can be attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder.
2. Criteria for a Fluency Disorder
A student has a fluency disorder and is eligible for speech or language special education services when:
 - a. The pattern interferes with communication as determined by an educational speech-language pathologist and either another adult or the student; AND
 - b. Dysfluent behaviors occur during at least 5% of the words spoken on two or more speech samples.

Voice Disorder

1. Definition of a Voice Disorder
"Voice disorder" means the absence of voice or presence of abnormal quality, pitch, resonance, loudness, or duration. Voice patterns that can be attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder.
2. Criteria for a Voice Disorder
A student has a voice disorder and is eligible for speech or language special education services when:
 - a. The pattern interferes with communication as determined by an educational speech-language pathologist and either another adult or the student; AND
 - b. Achievement of a moderate to severe vocal severity rating is demonstrated on a voice evaluation profile administered on two separate occasions, two weeks apart, and at different times of the day.

Articulation Disorder

1. Definition of an Articulation Disorder
"Articulation disorder" means the absence of or incorrect production of speech sounds or phonological processes that are developmentally appropriate. For the purposes of this subpart, phonological process means a regularly occurring simplification or deviation in an individual's speech as compared to the adult standard, usually one that simplifies the adult phonological pattern. Articulation patterns that can be attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder.
2. Criteria for an Articulation Disorder
A student has an articulation disorder and is eligible for speech or language special education services when the pupil meets the criteria in item A, and either sub item (B) or (C):
 - a. The pattern interferes with communication as determined by an educational speech-language pathologist and either another adult or the student; AND
 - b. Test performance falls 2.0 standard deviations or more below the mean on a technically adequate, norm referenced articulation test, OR
 - c. A student is nine years of age or older and a sound is consistently in error as documented by two, three-minute conversational speech samples.

Language Disorder

1. Definition of a Language Disorder
"Language disorder" means a breakdown in communication as characterized by problems in expressing needs, ideas, or information that may be accompanied by problems in understanding. Language patterns that can be attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder.
2. Criteria for a Language Disorder
A student has a language disorder and is eligible for speech or language special education services when:
 - a. The pattern interferes with communication as determined by an educational speech-language pathologist and either another adult or the student;
 - b. An analysis of a language sample or documented observation of communicative interaction indicates the student's language behavior falls below or is different from what would be expected given consideration to chronological age, developmental level, or cognitive level; AND
 - c. The student scores 2.0 standard deviations below the mean on at least two technically adequate, norm referenced language tests if available; OR
 - d. If technically adequate, norm referenced language tests are not available to provide evidence of a deficit of 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in the area of language, two documented measurement procedures indicate a substantial differences from what would be expected given consideration to chronological age, developmental level or cognitive level. The documented procedures may include additional language samples, criterion-referenced instruments, observations in natural environments, and parent reports.

Evaluations

- Regular education teachers must implement and document results for two pre-referral interventions for the behavior(s) of concern prior to a referral for special education evaluation including language, articulation, voice and stuttering, as well as all other areas of special education.
- Results from pre-referral interventions are used to help determine if an evaluation is necessary.
- An evaluation planning meeting must be held and parents must have input when the team reviews pre-referral and classroom performance data, discusses specific evaluation needs, and plans out a comprehensive evaluation.
- Multiple evaluation tools and methods must be used to determine eligibility for special education services, including speech-language services. It is not appropriate to use only standardized or norm-referenced tests. Instead, additional evaluation tools must be used in conjunction with standardized tests. These may include observations and behavioral samples, teacher/parent interviews, checklists, criterion referenced tests, and other informal evaluation procedures.
- The student must qualify for speech-language interventions by meeting the criteria for the speech or language impairment.
- The school team has to complete the evaluation and report the results to the parent within 30 school days of the parent's consent to the evaluation. The evaluation summary report must address all eligibility components for the specific speech-language disability category of concern
- Evaluations must use unbiased evaluation tools, and to rule out the presence of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors when evaluating students from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds for eligibility for speech-language services.
- Testing must be done in the student's native language to determine if a speech-language disorder exists in the student's native language as well as English using an interpreter who speaks the student's native language. English Language Learners are eligible for speech-language services in the schools only if a speech-language disorder can be demonstrated in the native language and in English. The reporting of test scores in standard deviation units is required for eligibility decisions. It is acceptable to report percentile ranks and other standard scores in addition to standard deviation units

Interventions

- Types of interventions include direct, indirect, consultation, and home program for generalization and carry-over.
- IEP team determines the appropriate intervention model and frequency of intervention given the least restrictive environment, the general education curriculum, the advantages of the educational environment and the continuum of service.

Student Safety

Speech Provider follows the school's policy and procedure to ensure student safety. In an unsafe student situation, Speech Provider SLP will report the situation to the school's special education director/coordinator to document and proceed with the school's safety policy.

HIPAA Requirements

HIPAA rules and regulations must be followed for students. Protected Health Information (PHI) includes name, age, address, social security number, health history, treatment, medications, payment record, and the fact that the student is an enrolled student, physical/mental/medical condition, including past, present or future. PHI may only be used, accessed, or disclosed as permitted by student's legal authority and may not be used, accessed, or disclosed unless related to treatment or payment or directed to do so by student's legal authority. Oral and written communication (which also includes phone, fax, and email) must safeguard PHI. Student records maintained in the SLPs office must be kept confidential and secure, and computer records and documents containing student information must be kept confidential and secure with a confidential computer password required to access student information. SLPs are required to follow their students' assigned school HIPAA rules and regulations. Any questions or concerns regarding HIPAA and PHI should be addressed to the student's school HIPAA specialists.
<http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/index.html>