

Speech and Language

Spotlight on: School-Age Children



COMMUNICATION
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Better Hearing & Speech Month

Speech and language disorders are among the most common disabilities that school-age children experience. These disorders can affect a child's academic and social success. Speech and language treatment makes all the difference!

Growing Communication Skills: Although a strong foundation for oral communication (talking, listening, and understanding) should form before a child enters school, the school years are a time when more advanced oral communication skills develop. Children should be able to increasingly participate in more complex conversations, stay on topic, follow multistep directions, and speak clearly.

Foundation for Academic Success: Good speech and spoken language skills are a precursor for written language (reading and writing) success. Children who have spoken speech or spoken language disorders are more likely to have trouble with reading, spelling, and writing. Reading and writing are the basis for all future school achievement, making early treatment necessary.

Speech and Language Disorders in the School Setting: As a child advances through school, each year is met with new academic and social expectations. Children with speech or language disorders may have trouble following directions or remembering what was taught in class, perform poorly on tests, get poor grades, or have trouble making friends. They may worry about being teased if they stutter or mispronounce certain sounds.

Treatment by a speech-language pathologist can help in all of these areas.

A Child's Right: Any child who qualifies for special education speech and language services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act receives those services at no additional cost to caregivers. Speech-language pathologists work in schools and help children with many types of communication problems, including the following:

- **Speech sounds**—how you say words and put sounds together into words. Children may say one sound for another, leave a sound out of a word, or have problems saying certain sounds clearly. Some may not be able to speak at all and may need help learning other ways to communicate, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).
- **Language**—how well you understand what you hear and use words to tell others what you are thinking or feeling. A child may have problems with vocabulary, concepts, grammar, and use of language (having conversations). Spoken language problems can lead to reading and writing problems.
- **Stuttering (fluency)**—how well your speech flows. A child may have trouble starting to speak or may repeat sounds, syllables, words, or phrases. They also may have tension or negative feelings about talking.
- **Thinking and memory (called "cognitive communication")**—includes problems with long- or short-term memory, attention, problem solving, or staying organized.



Speech-language pathologists can help!

Learn more at www.asha.org/public.



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