



LAURENS COUNTY SCHOOLS



# Speech and Language Impairment

# Speech-Language Impairment

- \* Speech or language impairment refers to a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice impairment that *adversely affects a child's educational performance*. It refers to impairments in the areas of speech sound production, fluency, voice or language. Georgia Department of Education [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(11)]

# Speech-Language Disorders

## DO affect learning

- \* Speech and language skills are essential to academic success and learning. Language is the basis of communication. Reading, writing, gesturing, listening, and speaking are all forms of language. Learning takes place through the process of communication. The ability to communicate with peers and adults in the educational setting is essential for a student to succeed in school.

# Speech Sound Production Impairment

- \* Refers to atypical production of speech sounds that interferes with intelligibility in conversational speech and obstructs learning successful verbal communication in the educational setting.
- \* Does not include:
  - \* Inconsistent or situational errors
  - \* Communication problems primarily from regional, dialectic, and/or cultural differences
  - \* Speech sound errors at or above age level according to established research-based developmental norms
  - \* Speech that is intelligible and without documented evidence of adverse affect on educational performance
  - \* Physical structures (e.g. missing teeth, unrepaired cleft lip and/or palate) are the primary cause of the speech sound

# Speech Sound Production Impairment

## \* How does this affect educational performance?

- \* Speech production is required for verbal expression in all curricular areas. Multiple articulation errors could impact spelling and reading. Noticeable differences in speech production can have a negative impact on self-confidence, peer relationships, and vocational/career opportunities.

## \* Tier 1 Strategies

- \* If you cannot understand the student, ask him/her to repeat themselves. It might help to ask the student to show you or say it in a different way. (e.g. writing)
- \* If the student's response contains a known sound error, repeat what the child said with an appropriate model. (e.g. If the child says 'nak' for snake, you would say, "Oh, you want the snake"). Focus on providing the appropriate model, not the error.
- \* If you hear a consistent speech sound error, use written text to increase the child's ability to see, hear and be aware of that sound. (e.g. Ask the student to find all of the words containing the error sound in a page of a story.)
- \* If you have a student who is able to make a sound correctly some of the time when they know an adult is listening, set up a non-verbal cue with that child to let them know that you are listening. (e.g. putting your hand on the student's shoulder before you call on them to read aloud.)
- \* Highlight words in the student's own writing or in classroom worksheets that contain sounds in error.

# SOUND DEVELOPMENT AGES

Research indicates that sounds develop over a range of ages. The ages on this sound chart allow students time to develop correct sound production within developmental norms.



# Language Impairment

Components Include: Auditory Processing, Semantics, Syntax, & Pragmatics

- \* Refers to impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken language which may also impair written and/or other symbol systems and is negatively impacting the child's ability to participate in the classroom environment.
- \* Does not include:
  - \* Children who are in the normal stages of second language acquisition and whose communication problems result from English being a secondary language unless it is also determined that they have a speech language impairment in their native/primary language.
  - \* Children who have regional, dialectic, and/or cultural differences.
  - \* Children who have auditory processing disorders not accompanied by language impairment.
  - \* Children who have anxiety disorders (e.g. selective mutism) unless it is also determined that they have a speech language impairment.

# Language Impairment

Components Include: Auditory Processing, Semantics, Syntax, & Pragmatics

- \* **Auditory Processing** (*Attention, memory, discrimination, sequencing, sound blending, etc.*)
  - \* How does this affect educational performance?
    - \* Deficits can affect performance in all academic areas that involve auditory reception and processing of curricular material. Spelling and reading can be affected by difficulty analyzing and applying the phonemic code.
  
- \* **Tier 1 Strategies**
  - \* Ask basic questions that have the answer in a picture or hands-on activity.
  - \* Provide small group opportunities for the children to discuss newly learned concepts/ideas.
  - \* Provide adequate time for the child to process what you have asked and form their answer. If the child does not respond after a given period of time, ask the question in a different way.
  - \* Do frequent comprehension checks when teaching. Stop periodically and discuss the information you have presented.
  - \* Be specific when giving directions.
  - \* When giving multi-step directions, write them on the board or provide another form of visual.
  - \* Provide additional support for writing down information, such as assignments in the student's homework notebook. Actual pictures could also be taken of what needs to go home (e.g. math book, writing notebook, etc.). Some students may need written directions on how to complete assignments so that parents can assist them in the home.

# Language Impairment

Components Include: Auditory Processing, Semantics, Syntax, & Pragmatics

- \* *Semantics* (*Vocabulary, concepts, multiple meanings, categorization, analogies, comprehension, etc.*)
  - \* How does this affect educational performance?
    - \* All areas of communication (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are affected by weakness in semantic skills, thereby impacting all areas of the curriculum.
  
- \* **Tier 1 Strategies**
  - \* Prior to introducing new units/stories discuss key vocabulary words and possible meanings.
  - \* When introducing words, use a graphic organizer or visual map to come up with word relationships including antonyms or synonyms.
  - \* When possible, pair a visual picture with vocabulary words. When vocabulary is abstract and pictures are not available, relate the words to personal experiences.
  - \* Place words and definitions on note cards. Use cards to play games such as matching or memory.
  - \* Create word list with vocabulary and definitions to display in a visible place within the classroom.
  - \* Provide student with vocabulary list including definitions one week prior to beginning a new unit.
  - \* Provide visual demonstrations of new concepts.
  - \* Give students time to talk through and demonstrate understanding of new concepts in social studies, science, math, etc.

# Language Impairment

Components Include: Auditory Processing, Semantics, Syntax, & Pragmatics

- \* Grammar/Syntax (*Parts of speech, sentence types, sentence construction*)
  - \* How does this affect educational performance?
    - \* The knowledge and application of grammatical rules is essential for both spoken and written language. Deficits impact the ability to comprehend, analyze, and produce language effectively.
- \* **Tier 1 Strategies**
  - \* If the child says something incorrectly repeat it for them correctly in a natural way. Be sensitive about not calling negative attention to their language. (e.g. CHILD: “I goed to the store.” TEACHER: “Oh, you went to the store.”)
  - \* When the child’s speech or writing contains grammar or word order errors, show them the correct form in writing.
  - \* When working with the child individually with written or oral language, repeat the error and ask the child how the sentence sounds. (e.g. CHILD: “I goed to the store.” TEACHER: “I goed to the store? Does that sound right?”) If the child is unable to correct the error, give them a choice. (e.g. “Which sounds better, ‘I goed to the store.’ or ‘I went to the store.’?”)
  - \* For frequently occurring errors, build it into daily oral language as practice for the entire class.

# Language Impairment

Components Include: Auditory Processing, Semantics, Syntax, & Pragmatics

- \* Pragmatics (Social appropriateness, nonverbal communication, critical thinking, making judgements, etc.)
  - \* How does this affect educational performance?
    - \* These skills affect listening, problem solving, reading comprehension, study skills, oral and written language, and social interactions.
  
- \* Tier 1 Strategies
  - \* Social Stories (Stories written to positively depict a situation in which a student has a difficult time-providing the student with appropriate ways to interact or respond.) \* Contact SLP for assistance.
  - \* Visual schedules (For students who may need visual input to assist with transitions and expectations for the day.) \*Contact SLP for assistance.
  - \* Allow student to work in a group with students who are accepting and supportive.
  - \* Search for opportunities that support appropriate social interactions. (e.g. ‘Bobby, will you please go to Sue’s desk and ask her to bring me her math folder.’)
  - \* To avoid feelings of rejection in group activities, assign partners rather than allow students to choose. Comment on positive models for targeted social skills when used by other students in the classroom. (“Jenny, I really like how you raised your hand instead of interrupting me when I was talking to the class.”)

# Fluency Impairment

- \* Refers to interruption in the flow of speech characterized by an atypical rate, or rhythm, and/or repetitions in sounds, syllables, words and phrases that significantly reduces the speaker's ability to participate within the learning environment. Fluency impairment includes disorders such as stuttering and cluttering.
- \* Does not include:
  - \* dysfluencies evident in only one setting or reported by one observer

# Fluency Impairment

- \* Affects on educational performance
  - \* Stuttering can inhibit classroom participation and affect peer relationships. Vocational/career choices may be limited, despite the individual's competency levels in non-speech areas.
- \* Tier 1 Strategies
  - \* Allow the student to complete his/her thoughts without interrupting or completing the sentence for them.
  - \* It is important not to ask the child to stop or start over their sentence. Asking the student to 'take a breath' or 'relax' can be felt as demeaning and is not helpful.
  - \* Maintain natural eye contact with the student. Try not to feel embarrassed or anxious as the student will pick up on your feelings and could become more anxious. Wait naturally until the child is finished.
  - \* Use a slow and relaxed rate with your own speech, but not so slow that you sound unnatural. Using pauses in your speech is an effective way to slow down your speech rate as well as the students'.
  - \* Give the student your full attention when they are speaking.
  - \* After a student completes a conversational turn, rephrase what they said in a fluent manner. This allows the student to realize you understand what they said but also provides a fluent model for them.
  - \* Call on the student in class when you feel that they will be successful with the answer (when the student raises his/her hand) versus putting the student on the spot when they have not volunteered information.

# Voice Impairment

- \* Refers to interruption in one or more processes of pitch, quality, intensity, or resonance that significantly reduces the speaker's ability to communicate effectively.
- \* Does not include:
  - \* Anxiety disorders (e.g. selective mutism)
  - \* Differences that are the direct result of regional, dialectic, and/or cultural differences
  - \* Differences related to medical issues not directly related to the vocal mechanism (e.g. laryngitis, allergies, asthma, reflux of the throat, colds, abnormal tonsils or adenoids, short-term vocal abuse or misuse, neurological pathology)
  - \* Vocal impairments that are found to be the direct result of or symptom of a medical condition unless the impairment impacts the child's performance in the educational environment and is amenable to improvement with therapeutic intervention.

# Voice Impairment

- \* Affects on educational performance
  - \* Noticeable differences in vocal pitch, quality, and volume can affect self-confidence and peer relationships.
- \* Tier 1 Strategies
  - \* If you have a student whose vocal quality is consistently poor (hoarse, breathy, rough, or they have no voice) or their vocal quality gets progressively worse as the day wears on try the following:
    - \* Allow them to have a water bottle at their desk for the student to take frequent sips of water.
    - \* Discuss healthy ways for students to use their voices. (e.g. drink water, no caffeine, no yelling or making strange noises, and/or use a quiet voice, but NOT a whisper)
    - \* Provide a positive comment to a student for using good vocal hygiene, such as not shouting to get attention.
    - \* Place a visual cue on students' desk (like a picture of someone talking). When you hear vocal misuse, touch the picture on the desk to help remind the student to use good vocal techniques.

# For More Information:

Contact the Speech-Language Pathologist at your school.

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