

Speech–Language Therapy Services in Education

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING LANGUAGE FOR LIFE



How do Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) work in Education?

- Department of Education SLPs are employed to provide services for students with special needs in communication who are experiencing barriers to learning.
- SLPs are university trained health professionals who are able to assess, diagnose and treat communication and swallowing difficulties.
- Special needs in communication can result from a number of factors including (but not restricted to):
 - An impairment (e.g. speech/ language, intellectual, autism spectrum disorder, physical, hearing or vision), or other special needs, such as ADHD;
 - Environmental factors such as family background, a mismatch between the language, dialect or communication style used at home and at school; or
 - Difficulties with eating, drinking, swallowing, and saliva control.

What areas can the SLP work on with a student?

Students may need SLP assistance in the following areas:

- **Oral Language:** Understanding directions, questions and different types of word and sentence structures; expressing information, knowing the words for things (vocabulary), and asking questions.
- **Speech:** Being able to say sounds correctly.
- **Phonological Awareness:** Being able to identify, segment, blend and manipulate sounds.
- **Pragmatics (Language Use):** Using language appropriately to be able to relate to peers and teachers.
- **Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC):** For students requiring high and low tech communication aides, such as key word signing or voice output applications.
- **Eating and Drinking:** For students who have difficulties with oral motor control required to safely eat or drink.

What can I do to support my child's oral language prior to school?

- Observe, wait and listen to what your child says.
- Crouch down to their level, comment on what they are doing.
- Follow your child's lead and interests.
- Balance comments and questions.
- Model good language and expand upon what child has said by adding a few extra words.
- Read LOTS of stories together.
- Expect your child to respond. Spend time waiting for a response, praise any attempts.
- Use visuals – objects, gestures, digital photos, drawings, clipart, pictures in magazines.
- Make talking fun and rewarding!

