

SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

1. Definition

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

Speech or Language Impairment include demonstration of impairments in the areas of language, articulation, voice, or fluency.

- (1) Language Impairment – A significant deficiency not consistent with the student's chronological age in one or more of the following areas:
 - (a) a deficiency in receptive language skills to gain information;
 - (b) a deficiency in expressive language skills to communicate information;
 - (c) a deficiency in processing (auditory perception) skills to organize information.
- (2) Articulation Impairment – A significant deficiency in ability to produce sounds in conversational speech not consistent with chronological age.
- (3) Voice Impairment – An excess or significant deficiency in pitch, intensity, or quality resulting from pathological conditions or inappropriate use of the vocal mechanism.
- (4) Fluency Impairment – Abnormal interruption in the flow of speech by repetitions or prolongations of a sound, syllable, or by avoidance and struggle behaviors.

Speech or Language deficiencies identified cannot be attributed to characteristics of second language acquisition and/or dialectic differences.

2. Evaluation

The characteristics as identified in the Speech or Language Definition are present.

Evaluation Procedures

Evaluation of Speech or Language Impairments shall include the following:

- a. Language Impairment – a significant deficiency in language shall be determined by:
 - (1) an analysis of receptive, expressive, and/or composite test scores that fall at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean of the language assessment instruments administered; and
 - (2) a minimum of two measures shall be used, including criterion-referenced and/or norm-referenced instruments, functional communication analyses, and language samples. At least one standardized comprehensive measure of language ability shall be included in the evaluation process.

Evaluation of language abilities shall include the following:

- (a) hearing screening;

- (b) receptive language: vocabulary, syntax, morphology;
 - (c) expressive language: mean length of utterance, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, morphology; and
 - (d) auditory perception: selective attention, discrimination, memory, sequencing, association, and integration.
- (3) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Language Impairment adversely impacts his/her educational performance in his/her learning environment.
- b. Articulation Impairment – a significant deficiency in articulation shall be determined by one of the following:
 - (1) articulation error(s) persisting one year beyond the highest age when 85% of students have acquired the sounds based upon current developmental norms;
 - (2) evidence that the child's scores are at a moderate, severe, or profound rating on a measure of phonological processes; or
 - (3) misarticulations that interfere with communication and attract adverse attention.

Evaluation of articulation abilities shall include the following:

 - (a) appropriate formal/informal instrument(s);
 - (b) stimulability probes;
 - (c) oral peripheral examination; and
 - (d) analysis of phoneme production in conversational speech.
 - (4) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Articulation Impairment adversely impacts his/her educational performance in his/her learning environment.
- c. Voice Impairment – evaluation of vocal characteristics shall include the following:
 - (1) hearing screening;
 - (2) examination by an otolaryngologist;
 - (3) oral peripheral examination; and
 - (4) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Voice Impairment adversely impacts his/her educational performance in his/her learning environment.
- d. Fluency Impairment – evaluation of fluency shall include the following:
 - (1) hearing screening;
 - (2) information obtained from parents, students, and teacher(s) regarding non-fluent behaviors/attitudes across communication situations;
 - (3) oral peripheral examination; and
 - (4) documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Fluency Impairment adversely impacts his/her educational performance in his/her learning environment.

Evaluation Participants

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of a Speech or Language Impairment:

- (1) the parent;
- (2) the child's general education classroom teacher;
- (3) a licensed school speech-language pathologist, a licensed speech-language pathologist, a licensed speech-language therapist, and a speech-language teacher if working under the direction of a licensed school speech-language pathologist or licensed speech-language pathologist;
- (4) a licensed special education teacher, when appropriate;
- (5) a licensed otolaryngologist (for voice impairments only); and
- (6) other professional personnel, as indicated.