

Speech / language therapy is a related service provided by speech / language pathologists (SLP) or a certified speech / language pathology assistant (SLP-A) to address the needs of students with communication impairments.

Speech impairments are characterized by having difficulty understanding what a child is saying, how the child pronounces sounds and words. Language therapy on-the-other- hand covers a wide variety of issues. They can be in expressive language (what the child says) or receptive language (what the child understands); voice quality; and/or stuttering. Additionally, for some students therapy is in the areas of pragmatics or semantics.. Pragmatics is the area of language function that includes the use of language in social contexts (knowing what to say, how to say it, and when to say it - and how to "be" with other people). Semantics is the aspect of language function that relates to understanding the meanings of words, phrases and sentences, and using words appropriately when we speak.

Typically, speech / language pathologists:

- 1. Screen, identify, assess, and diagnose disorders of language and/or speech, and then provide therapy to address those areas that are not developmental (within the typical range for a child's age) in nature.**

Students may be referred to the speech / language pathologist by the Child Study Team at their school as a part of a complete psychological evaluation, or by the child's parent or classroom teacher due to concerns regarding the child's ability to communicate effectively. After the referral is received, the SLP will typically screen the child to determine if further evaluation is necessary and make recommendations regarding the child's communication skills to the referring teacher and parent. If a complete speech / language evaluation is the recommendation, then the SLP obtains written permission for the evaluation from the parent.

It should be noted that a student with a speech or language impairment does not necessarily have to be demonstrating academic problems in order to be considered eligible to receive speech / language services. Effective oral communication is regarded as a skill basic to academic performance.