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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

▪ What is Speech and Language Therapy?

Speech-Language Therapy is the treatment of speech and/or language delays or disorders. A speech delay or disorder refers to a problem with the actual production of sounds, whereas a language disorder refers to a difficulty understanding or putting words together to communicate ideas.

▪ What are Speech and Language Delays / Disorders?

Speech delays /disorders include the following problems, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA):

- *Articulation disorders* include difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that other people hear *how* your child is saying things instead of listening to *what* is being said.
- *Fluency disorders* include problems such as stuttering, the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions (st-st-stuttering), or prolonging sounds and syllables (sssstuttering).
- *Resonance or voice disorders* include problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of the voice that distract listeners from what's being said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for the child when speaking.

Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive:

- *Receptive* disorders refer to difficulties understanding or processing language.
- *Expressive* disorders include difficulty putting words together, limited vocabulary, difficulty with sentence structure or inability to use language in a socially appropriate way.

Other challenges a child may have that necessitate speech and language therapy may include the following.

- *Pragmatic language* disorders encompass the social graces of communication. In today's world an increasing number of children lack the basic social skills to interact positively with others, to solve problems, to follow directions, to carry on a conversation, and to participate in academic and social settings. It is difficult for these children to get along with others in the appropriate manner and to do what is expected in the classroom and in other social situations.

▪ **Who Treats a Child with a Speech and/or Language Disorder?**

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) are professionals educated in the study of human communication, its development, and its disorders. They hold at least a master's degree and state certification/licensure in the field, as well as a certificate of clinical competency from ASHA.

Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants (SLPA) are professionals who have completed requirements in the area of speech and language and are licensed to practice under the supervision of a SLP.

By assessing the speech, language, cognitive-communication, and swallowing skills of children and adults, speech-language pathologists can identify types of communication problems and the best way to treat them.

▪ **How does Speech and Language Therapy work?**

In **Speech-Language Therapy**, a SLP will work with a child one-to-one, in a small group, or directly in a classroom to overcome difficulties involved with a specific disorder. Therapists use a variety of strategies, keeping the child's specific needs and personality in mind, to make the changes needed to reach the goal of improved communication.