

Speech-Language Pathology

Definition

Speech-language pathology is the treatment for the improvement or cure of communication disorders, including speech, language, and swallowing disorders. The term used to describe professionals in this discipline is speech and language pathologist (SLP).

SLP's are specially trained professionals who have earned:

- A master's degree
- Certification with the Saskatchewan Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
- Certification with the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologist
- May have certification with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

SLP's work with school children who have communication problems that affects success in:

- Classroom activities
- Social interaction
- Literacy
- Learning

SLP's work with children who have a variety of disabilities such as:

- Language
- Voice
- Fluency or Stuttering
- Articulation
- Swallowing or dysphagia

Language disabilities include:

- Slow development of vocabulary, concepts or grammar
- Inability to use different communication styles for different situations
- Poor building blocks of understanding/expressing ideas, social development, learning, reading, and writing

Voice Disorders:

- Speech that is too high, low, or monotonous in pitch
- Interrupted by breaks
- Too loud or too soft

- Harsh, hoarse, breathy, or nasal

Fluency or Stuttering Problems:

- Interruptions in flow or rhythm
- Can include hesitations, repetitions, or prolongations
- Can affect sounds, syllables, words, or phrases

Articulation Disorders

- Saying one sound for another (wabbit for rabbit)
- Omitting a sound in a word (i-cream for ice cream)
- Distorting a sound (thee for see)

Swallowing/Dysphagia

- Difficulty in sucking, chewing, triggering a swallow, moving food into the stomach.
- Interfere with eating lunch and snacks
- Reduce opportunities that build friendships
- Can affect social and communication skills
- Can impact learning

Speech and language disorders can be associated with:

- Hearing loss
- Cleft palate
- Cerebral palsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Learning disabilities
- Autism
- Developmental delays
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Other problems

SLP's have many roles in schools:

- Prevention of communication disorders
- Identification of students at risk for later problems
- Assessment of students' communication skills
- Evaluation of the results of comprehensive assessments
- Collaboration with teachers and other professionals

Signs of Communication Disorders:

- Late talker
- Difficult to understand by listeners
- Below expectations in classroom
- Difficulty learning to read and write
- Unable to express thoughts and ideas
- Problems understanding others and following directions
- Doesn't get along with others
- Problems taking tests