Speech and Language at a Glance

A practical introduction to speech and language services for families.

A Note for Families

Speech and language services are among the most common supports in schools, and also among the most misunderstood. Communication affects reading, writing, learning, and friendships. This guide explains the basics. It is a starting point, not a substitute for individualized guidance or evaluation.

Speech vs. Language

Speech is how we produce sounds and words. Language is how we understand and use words to share ideas. A child can have needs in one area, the other, or both.

Areas of Support

Articulation	Producing speech sounds clearly and correctly.
Fluency	The smoothness and flow of speech, including stuttering.
Voice	The pitch, volume, or quality of the voice.
Receptive Language	Understanding words, directions, questions, and stories.
Expressive Language	Using words and sentences to share thoughts, needs, and ideas.
Social Communication	Using language in social situations, such as conversations, turn-taking, and reading cues.

> DEA PERSPECTIVE
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> **Communication is the foundation for learning.**
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> Language skills shape how a child follows directions, understands what they read, writes, and connects with peers. Supporting communication supports everything else.

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How Services Are Provided

Pull-Out	The student works with a speech-language pathologist (SLP) outside the classroom, alone or in a small group.
Push-In	The SLP works with the student inside the classroom during regular instruction.
Consultation	The SLP works with teachers and staff to support the student's communication throughout the day.

Common Misconceptions

MYTH	WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW
My child talks fine, so they don't need language support.	Language includes understanding, vocabulary, and organizing ideas. A child can speak clearly and still have language needs.
Speech therapy only helps with pronunciation.	Services can address understanding, expression, social communication, fluency, and voice.
My child will just grow out of it.	Some children do, but many benefit from early support. An evaluation can help you know the difference.

Questions About Speech and Language Services?

Every child is different, and no guide can replace individualized support. If you would like help understanding an evaluation, service minutes, or progress on communication goals, schedule a consultation with Distributed Education Advocacy.

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