



Speech and language is essential for development. Nearly every aspect of life is grounded in language – understanding your parent or teacher, expressing yourself, connecting with your friends, understanding what you are reading, expressing yourself through writing, organising your thoughts, expressing your thoughts in a coherent manner, understanding your emotions and perspectives of other people, and so on.

## Language

Language is the spoken & written system of communication through which knowledge, beliefs, and behavior can be experienced, explained, and shared. Language is made up of socially shared rules such as:

- Knowing what words mean (e.g. “star” can refer to a bright object or a celebrity).
- How to make new words (e.g. friend, friendly, unfriendly).
- What word combinations are best in what situations (“could you please move your bag” can change to “Get your bag out of here” if the first request did not produce results).
- How to put words together (e.g. “Tom walked to his classroom” rather than “Tom classroom walked”).



### Language Consists Of:

- Phonology (identifying and distinguishing sounds; phonological awareness),
- Semantics (understanding and use of vocabulary and concepts),
- Syntax (understanding and using correct grammar structure of sentences),
- Morphology (understanding & use of word structure)
- Pragmatics (understanding & using the social aspects of language, including conversational exchanges and production of cohesive and relevant messages during conversations).

### Speech :

Speech is the vocal form of communication. It includes:

- Articulation. This is how speech sounds are made. (e.g. a child must learn how to pronounce /th/ in order to say “thought” instead of “fought”).
- Motor planning skills. This is an ability to sequence sounds & syllables in a word or a set of words in an utterance.
- Voice. This is how vocal folds & breathing produce sound (e.g. if your voice is misused it can become hoarse or you can lose it).
- Fluency. This is the rhythm of speech (e.g. hesitations or stuttering can impact your fluency of speech).

### Speech & Language Pathologists

Speech & Language Pathologists (SLP) are specialists in the identification, assessment, & support of individuals with speech, language, & communication needs. They support individuals with speech, language, social, or communication challenges throughout their lifespan.

Our pathologists strongly believe in proactive early intervention & will intensively work with young children & relevant stakeholders to consolidate & facilitate the development of communication skills. Our therapists understand that for many children, teenagers, and parents, therapy can be daunting. Our therapists are skilled at building a strong relationship with their clients and making their sessions engaging and productive. As with the other members of the Child Development Team, our therapists ensure that other relevant personnel, such as teachers and tutors, are communicated with to provide a systemic approach to speech and language therapy.



**When a child has trouble understanding others (receptive language) or has trouble sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings (expressive language) then she may have a language disorder.**  
**When a child has trouble producing speech sounds correctly or fluently, or has problems with her voice, then she may have a speech disorder.**



## **When should my child see a SLP?**

### **Our Pathologists Typically Support Students Who May Have Difficulty With:**

- speaking as clearly as their peers, using complex sentences & age appropriate vocabulary
- using verbal means of communicating and relying on gestures,
- producing fluent speech due to stuttering or cluttering,
- engaging in communication and may appear shy or reluctant to communicate,
- reading and understanding texts, and/or answering questions based on them,
- using their communication skills in appropriate contexts or with different people, although they may have acquired vocabulary and language
- learning, memorizing, or conceptualizing new information,
- formulating their ideas and organizing discourse cohesively,
- understanding perspectives, thoughts, and opinions of other people,
- reasoning, understanding humour, ambiguity,
- executive function (organization, task initiation, planning, abstract thinking, etc.).

### ***Speech and Language Services:***

**Our SLPs feel that if a care giver, teacher or significant person in a child's life expresses concern about speech, social, or language development, it is recommended that an assessment be conducted.**

#### **1 Assessment:**

Our speech & language pathologists provide comprehensive speech & language evaluations to determine whether a child has a communication difficulty, the nature of this difficulty, & appropriate interventions or recommendations needed to facilitate language development. Our pathologists use a variety of methods including a battery of tests, individual & classroom observations, parent/teacher interviews, etc., to create a profile of the student's communication skills. Our speech and language pathologists will often teach parents and relevant educators practical strategies of how to consolidate a child's language development to ensure that there is a clear road map to support this child.

#### **2 Screening:**

A speech pathologist may need a brief look at the child's communication skills with the purpose to determine if further assessment is required. This may be useful if the student's parents or teachers are unsure if he/she has any difficulties in the communication area.

#### **3 Intervention:**

Therapy is provided to those who have challenges in the above-mentioned areas of development. Sessions may be different in length depending on the child's needs, age, ability to focus, etc.

#### **4 Consultation:**

Often parents are unsure about how a speech pathologist may help their child with development of his/her communication skills. They may need guidance with understanding the process of identifying these challenges or the treatment methods and techniques that are recommended to address the difficulties. A consultation with a speech language pathologist will help parents find answers to these questions.