



## **SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is a Pediatric Speech-Language Pathologist?**

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP), also known as Speech Therapists diagnose and provide treatment for children with a variety of speech-language, voice, and feeding-swallowing problems.

### **What kinds of speech and language disorders affect children?**

Speech and language disorders can affect the way children talk, understand, analyze or process information. Speech disorders include the clarity, voice quality, and fluency of a child's spoken words. Language disorders include a child's ability to hold meaningful conversations, understand others, problem solve, comprehend, and express thoughts through spoken or written words.

### **What are Feeding and Swallowing Disorders?**

Children with feeding and swallowing disorders may present with a variety of symptoms including:

- Refusal of different textured foods
- Prolonged feeding times
- Excess drooling or spilling of food and liquids from the mouth
- Frequent spitting up
- Wet, gurgly voice or breathing
- Coughing or gagging during meals
- Recurrent pneumonia and/or respiratory infections
- Slow weight gain
- Younger children may demonstrate stiffening of body, irritability, and/or lack of alertness during feeding

### **What is a receptive language disorder?**

Receptive language includes the skills involved in understanding language. Receptive language disorders are difficulties in the ability to attend to, process, comprehend, and/or retain spoken language.

### **Is my child showing signs of a receptive language disorder?**

Some early signs and symptoms of a receptive language disorder include:

- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty with answering questions appropriately
- Difficulty attending to spoken language
- Inappropriate and/or off topic responses to questions

Signs and symptoms compiled from [www.kidspeech.com](http://www.kidspeech.com)

### **What is an expressive language disorder?**

Expressive language includes the skills involved in communicating one's thoughts and feelings to others. An expressive language disorder concerns difficulty with verbal expressi

### **Is my child showing signs of an expressive language disorder?**

Some signs and symptoms of an expressive language disorder include:

- Difficulty using grammatical forms such as plurals, pronouns, past tense verbs, complex verb forms, or other grammar forms
- Limited vocabulary
- Repetition of words or syllables
- Repeating verbal information stated by others (echolalia)
- Difficulty understanding conceptual words, such as ones that describe position, time, quality or quantity
- Word retrieval difficulties
- Substituting one word for another or misnaming items
- Relying on non-verbal or limited means of communicating

### **Is my child's "stuttering" normal?**

Non-fluent speech is typical between the ages of two and six years. It is typical for non-fluent speech to last up to six months, improve then return. A speech-language evaluation may be in order if your child exhibits any other speech and language difficulties or was a late talker. Any child who is demonstrating any "struggle behaviors" (e.g., facial/bodily tension, breathing disruptions, blocks, grimacing) should be referred to a speech-language pathologist immediately.

### **What is an articulation disorder?**

Articulation is the production of speech sounds. An articulation disorder is when a child does not make speech sounds correctly due to incorrect placement or movement of the lips, tongue, velum, and/or pharynx. It is important to recognize that there are differences in the age at which children produce specific speech sounds in all words and phrases. Mastering specific speech sounds may take place over several years.

### **What is a phonological disorder?**

Phonology refers to the speech sound system of language. A phonological disorder is when a child is not using speech sound patterns appropriately. A child whose sound structures are different from the speech typical for their stage of development, or who produce unusual simplifications of sound combinations may be demonstrating a phonological disorder.

### **What are some signs of an articulation/phonological disorder in my child?**

Signs of a possible articulation/phonological disorder in a preschool child may include:

- Omits medial and final sounds
- Is difficult to understand
- Omits sounds or substitutes incorrect sound for an appropriate sound
- Limited variety of speech sounds
- Omits initial consonants
- Asymmetrical tongue or jaw movement
- Tongue between teeth for many sounds