

Speech and Language Impaired (SLI)

General Description of Population

Speech impaired means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, which adversely affects a child's educational performance. §121a.5 (b) (10)

Common Characteristics

- articulation errors, including omissions, substitutions, or distortions of sound
- voice impairment, including inappropriate pitch, loudness, or voice quality
- fluency impairment, including abnormal rate of speaking, speech interruptions, and repetition of sounds, words, phrases, or sentences, which interferes with effective communication
- one or more language impairments, i.e. phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic use of aural/oral language
- possible low self-esteem/self-concept
- inadequate social skills
- difficulties in utilization of pragmatic language skills
- difficulties with verbal and written communication (receptive and expressive)
- poor memory abilities (visual/auditory)
- lack of learning strategies
- difficulties in language processing
- social/emotional problems
- poor phonology/language-based skills
- difficulties with vocabulary, sight words, decoding, and comprehension
- lack of overall academic/social-based communication
- language delayed
- low vocabulary
- improper grammar usage
- poor spelling skills
- difficulty writing down thoughts
- difficulties with abstract ideas
- poor written skills
- poor auditory skills

Instructional Strategies

- involve students in simple hands-on activities targeted at basic social interaction skills that promote self-esteem/self concept
- divide academic goals into small units, utilizing the same theme
- provide a variety of experiences consistently and repetitively stressing a theme until reaching proficiency level
- structure simple task encounters, emphasizing goals that are easy for the student to accomplish; also offer maximal social interaction opportunities
- interrelate all tasks in a progressive hierarchy, never moving to a higher step until accomplishing mastery
- work at the student's pace
- present only one concept at a time
- provide verbal and tangible reinforcements
- provide parents with information they can use at home to reinforce the in-school program
- utilize speech therapists to present language units to the entire class
- use computers in the classroom to enhance language skills
- establish communication between staff receiving and sending mainstreamed students
- set up orientations/training sessions among staff who have been involved with the student
- demonstrate patience, respect, and understanding for these students which can serve as an example for other students and staff
- encourage reading and writing daily
- use tactile and visual cues e.g., pictures
- incorporate vocabulary with unit being taught
- stress need for correct spelling
- provide fun activities that are functional and practical
- be aware of the student's functioning level in the following areas and how they affect academic process: auditory skills, semantics, word recall, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics

Behavioral Strategies

- establish clear rules and guidelines early on
- ask students to repeat the rules to you in their own words
- allow for time-out periods
- praise the positive
- make expectations known
- give extra praise for long sought success
- reward documented practice at home
- ignore negative behavior when possible
- reward good work for every session
- encourage positive behavior by using a specific reward system decided upon and designed with the students' help
- use reciprocal contract which is individual for each student
- utilize a daily sticker chart as a reward system
- establish social encounters between students in general and special education which encourages friendship, trust, empathy, and sensitivity toward each other

Support Staff

- Teacher of Speech & Language Impaired
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker