

## NSSEO SLP CRITERIA

### Definitions, Eligibility, & Universal Strategies

#### **ISBE Disability Area Definition**

Speech or Language Impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

#### **Educational and Functional Impact**

In order to qualify for special education services under IDEA (2004), including those provided by an audiologist or a speech-language pathologist (SLP), a student's disability must also adversely affect educational performance. "Educational performance" is not limited to academic performance but may also include functional, social, and developmental information, in addition to academic information (see IDEA, 2004, Sections 300.304–300.8).

#### **Speech Sound Production Disorder**

The student is unable to produce sounds correctly in conversational speech. The impairment is typically characterized by the omission, distortion, substitution, addition and/or inaccurate sequencing of speech sounds. Errors are not related to cultural or dialectal differences.

***A student is **not** eligible for special education and related services in the area of speech and language impairment when:***

1. *Sound errors are age appropriate*
2. *Sound errors are due to unfamiliarity of the English language, dialectal differences, temporary physical disabilities or environmental, cultural, or economic factors.*
3. *Sound errors do not affect the student's ability to communicate in the school learning and/or social situations.*

#### **Tier 1: Speech Strategies for the Classroom**

1. **Increase awareness of speech sounds through discrimination (“stop” vs “top”)**
2. **Model the accurate speech sound production to facilitate imitation.**
3. **Use visual cues (gesture, picture, text)**
4. **Compensate by slowing down, hitting sounds, pausing between phrases, and looking at the listener.**
5. **Provide opportunities for practice during the school day in routine activities.**

#### **Language Disorders**

The student has impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken, written and/or other symbol systems. The disorder may involve (1) the form of language (i.e. grammar), (2) the content of language (i.e. vocabulary), and/or (3) the function of language in communication (i.e. social) in any combination.

**A student is *not* eligible for special education and related services in the area of speech and language impairment when:**

1. Language differences are primarily due to environmental, cultural, or economic factors including non-standard English and regional dialect
2. Language performance does not interfere with the student's ability to benefit from education.

#### **Tier 1: Comprehension Strategies for the Classroom**

1. **Get the student's attention before speaking**
2. **Provide 'wait time' for student to process the direction or question.**
3. **Present the spoken directions with visual support (gesture, picture, text).**
4. **Encourage students to ask questions when they don't understand.**
5. **Check comprehension with a question.**

#### **Tier 1: Strategies for the Classroom to Support Expression**

1. **Repeat the message in error to the student to facilitate self-monitoring and correction. (Easier to monitor on others)**
2. **Expand upon the student's spoken message. (i.e. The man entered the room. "The tall man entered the dark room.")**
3. **Restate the student's message with accuracy. (i.e. It fell on the floor. "It fell on the floor.")**
4. **Provide a carrier phrase for sentence completion. (i.e. A plateau is a ...)**
5. **Utilize graphic organizers to support narrative and oral reports (see Holt Interactive Graphic Organizers).**

#### **Tier 1: Strategies for the Classroom to Support Social Language**

1. **Talk about hidden social rules (i.e. When someone pauses, it is your turn to talk.)**
2. **Role play new or challenging social situations**
3. **Take advantage of teachable moments (i.e. greeting others upon entering the classroom)**
4. **Provide opportunities for the student to state what he/she thinks and/or feels when...**
5. **Discuss the perspective of others (i.e. "How does your friend feel when you...?")**

#### **Fluency (stuttering) Disorder**

The student exhibits the abnormal flow of verbal expression. It is characterized by impaired rate and rhythm of connected speech and may be accompanied by struggle behavior.

Consideration must be given to the student's chronological age and perception of the problem by the student and parents, the contextual situations in which the student functions and the overall impact on educational performance.

**A student is *not* eligible for special education and related services in the area of speech and language impairment when dysfluencies:**

1. Are part of normal speech development.
2. Do not cause the speaker to modify behavior.
3. Do not interfere with the student's ability to benefit from education.

**Tier 1: Strategies for the Classroom to Increase Fluency**

1. Try to model 'slow and relaxed' speech when talking to the student.
2. Give undivided attention when listening to the student.
3. Model 'pausing & thinking' before sharing thoughts.
4. Take turns talking & listening. Do not interrupt the student.
5. Reassure the student (i.e. " I know it is hard to talk sometimes.")

**Voice Disorder**

As any deviation in pitch, loudness, quality, or other attribute which consistently interferes with communication; draws unfavorable attention; adversely affects the speaker or the listener; or is inappropriate to the age, sex, or culture of the individual. Voice quality can be affected by either organic or functional factors.

Consideration must be given to age, sex, environment, and perception of the problem by the student, parents, speech language pathologist, and other school personnel or medical specialists.

**A student is *not* eligible for special education and related services in the area of speech and language impairment when voice concerns:**

1. Are the result of temporary physical factors such as allergies, colds, abnormal tonsils or adenoids, short term vocal abuse or misuse.
2. Are the result of regional, dialectic or cultural differences.
3. Do not interfere with the student's ability to benefit from education.

**Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered approach** used to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes and to provide specialized instruction and strategies to address learning needs within the general education setting. Within an RTI model, teams provide evidence-based interventions, monitor student progress, and adjust interventions depending on student responsiveness. RTI is a process of support for all students and is sanctioned in the re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004).

SLPs play a critical role in assessment, instruction, intervention, progress monitoring, interpreting data and reporting on how communication skills relate to literacy and academic success.

**Documenting RTI/MTSS**

Clinicians interface with students without IEPs (depending on local and state practices) as a part of the RTI/MTSS. Within the context of RTI/MTSS, clinicians are involved in screening, identifying instructional goals and strategies, and working face to face for limited periods of time on specific general education objectives. Each district or state establishes its own procedures for documentation and parent/guardian notification of these activities. Identify the documentation expectations in your specific setting.

If the district or state does not have specific procedures, the best rule of thumb is to document the IEP services in the same way that you would for IDEA services, creating a comprehensive set of data that shows the date/time/place when general education support was provided, the goals addressed, and progress achieved. (ASHA)

**Tier 1 Service Examples:**

Collaborate, Screen, Interpret assessment results, Model communication-facilitating strategies, Suggest classroom modifications and accommodations, Provide professional development programs, Assist in identifying causal factors and prerequisite skills for struggling students, and Help families understand the link between language and literacy

**Tier 2 Service Examples:**

Collaborate, Conduct more in-depth screenings, Analyze curricular materials to determine appropriate modifications and adaptations, Pre-teach or re-teach vital curricular concepts, Provide short-term instruction in the classroom or in another setting, and Participate in progress monitoring for specific groups or individuals

**Tier 3 Service Examples:**

Collaborate, Conduct more frequent assessments and intense interventions with struggling students, and Identify factors that may indicate a need for referral for a full multidisciplinary evaluation.

(ASHA, 2010)