

## SCOPE OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

Speech and language services are provided to address a variety of specific delays and disorders in the area of articulation, language, fluency, voice, implementation of alternative and augmentative communication systems, and communication programming related to other disabilities such as intellectual and multiple disability and hearing impairment.

### I. Referral Process

The school establishes the need and assigns a priority for speech and language services. Not all students may be immediately referred at the beginning of the school term. A referral is completed by the classroom teacher in consultation with other colleagues. These referrals may be a result of student, parent, or school request.

Students referred may demonstrate one or more of the following:

**Speech Disorders:** These involve problems with the production of speech and may include difficulties with articulation (production of speech sounds), oral motor movements, volitional use of speech (apraxia), and phonology (rules of speech production).

Articulation problems are the most commonly referred. Phonemes may be omitted, substituted, added or distorted. Ninety percent of all articulation disorders in children are functional in nature, that is, having no physical or organic etiology. Most programming is home based.

**Voice Disorders:** Any voice which is inappropriate for the age, sex, or cultural environment of a student is considered disordered. The three parameters upon which we measure voice are pitch (high vs. low), loudness (soft vs. loud), and quality (hypernasal vs. hyponasal).

Voice problems may either be organic or functional in nature. One common problem is vocal abuse resulting from such activities as screaming on the playground. We may also see student exhibiting breathiness, pitch breaks, shallow breathing or aphonia (no voice).

**Fluency Disorders:** A student with a fluency problem (commonly referred to as stuttering) may exhibit behaviours such as pauses, blocks, and repetitions of the initial sound, word, or phrase. Secondary mannerisms such as eye blinks, head jerks, etc. may often be associated. Extreme anxiety, low self esteem and insecurity may also occur.

Assistance may include environmental support, information for the parents and teachers, and periodic direct services of the speech-language pathologist.

**Language Disorders and Delays:** This broad group refers to students with delays or disorders of ability to use linguistic symbols. They are often divided into receptive and expressive language. Receptive language includes understanding of basic concepts and ideas, auditory attention, auditory

processing, auditory sequencing, auditory discrimination, and auditory memory. Expressive language includes grammar, vocabulary, word finding, ordering of words and thoughts, and non-verbal aspects of language.

Generally, this service is a combination of school and home programming.

**Hearing Loss:** Students with a hearing loss vary from a slight impairment to those requiring amplification such as personal hearing aids and/or auditory trainers. Presenting problems might include inability to follow directions orally, inattentiveness to spoken messages, language delay, articulation problems, and voicing problems.

Program support is offered to parents and teachers in the form of care and maintenance of amplification systems as well as strategies for improving speech and language.

## **II. SERVICES TO STUDENTS**

Indirect and direct services include:

- formal and informal assessment
- collaborative program planning with school personnel
- indirect intervention through consultation with school personnel and the provision of home programs and classroom-based programs
- consultation with outside agencies

## **III. PREVENTATIVE SERVICES**

Preventative services are available on a continuing basis. These services include:

- inservicing classroom teachers, learning assistance teachers, special needs teachers, teacher assistants, and parents for communication disorders such as fluency, language (including auditory processing), and articulation.
- hearing screening as requested by parents and/or teachers.
- consulting with kindergarten and grade one teachers in determining appropriate referrals.
- contributing information for other professionals and agencies concerning various aspects of speech and language disorders.