

What is Speech Therapy?

And what's the difference between speech and language?

Speech is the verbal means of communicating. Speech consists of the following:

Articulation

How speech sounds are made (e.g., children must learn how to produce the "r" sound in order to say "rabbit" instead of "wabbit").

Voice

Use of the vocal folds and breathing to produce sound (e.g., the voice can be abused from overuse or misuse and can lead to hoarseness or loss of voice).

Fluency

The rhythm of speech (e.g., hesitations or stuttering can affect fluency).

When a person has trouble understanding others (receptive language), or sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings completely (expressive language), then he or she has a language disorder.

When a person is unable to produce speech sounds correctly or fluently, or has problems with his or her voice, then he or she has a speech disorder.

Language is made up of socially shared rules that include the following:

What words mean (e.g., "star" can refer to a bright object in the night sky or a celebrity)

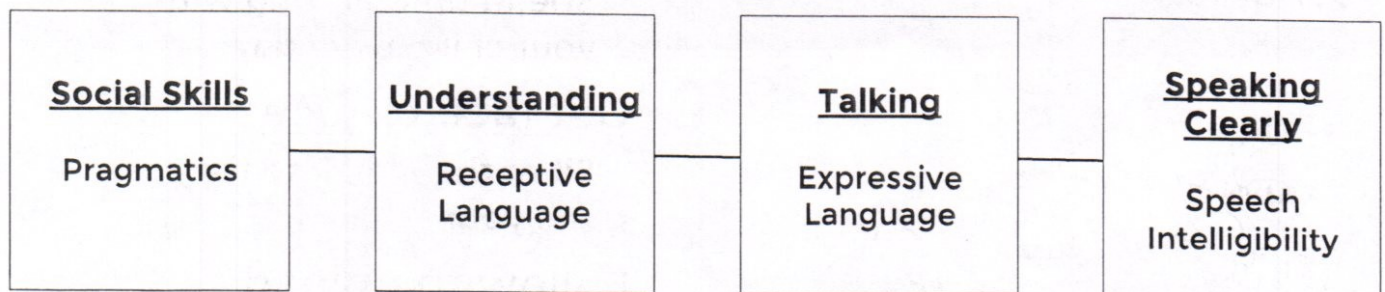
How to make new words (e.g., friend, friendly, unfriendly)

How to put words together (e.g., "Peg walked to the new store" rather than "Peg walk store new")

What word combinations are best in what situations ("Would you mind moving your foot?" could quickly change to "Get off my foot, please!" if the first request did not produce results)

Language and speech disorders can exist together or by themselves. The problem can be mild or severe.

(Source: www.asha.org/public/speech/development/language_speech/)



Speech therapy is more than just talking.

We also help people to communicate using sign language or with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) such as pictures or a communication device.

For more information on speech and language visit www.ASHA.org