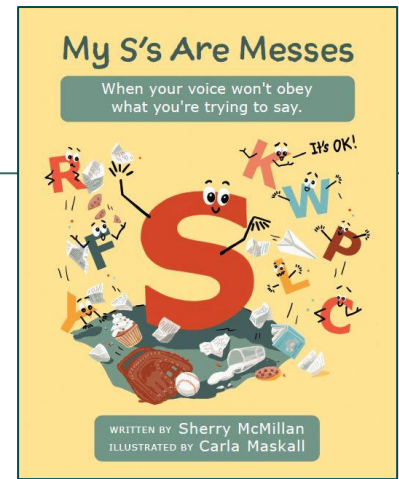


My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Kids

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

We see how hard you're working, and there's no mistaking how we feel when speak heart to heart!



Your body is AMAZING!

Did you know that when you speak, your brain, ears, vocal chords, breath, jaw, lips, tongue, and more are ALL working together?

Even when you have some trouble with speaking, **there are LOTS of sounds that you make perfectly!** Can you think of some of those? Can you say them?

Do you have some words that you LOVE saying? Sometimes it's fun to say (or sing!) our favourite words or phrases out loud.



Did you Know? There are lots of different reasons why people might have a speech difference.

- Sometimes we have trouble **hearing** the sounds the way other people hear them. That means that we might say those sounds differently too.
- Sometimes it's way our **mouth or tongue** works.
- Sometimes we need just a little more **time** to organize our thoughts and understand what we've heard or to prepare what we're going to say. If we don't take that time, the words might "skip or get stuck" or "show up in between".
- Sometimes we have an **injury or illness** that affects our hearing or speech, sometimes we're born that way.
- Sometimes people learn an **additional language** and that language has new sounds that are tricky for us to say.

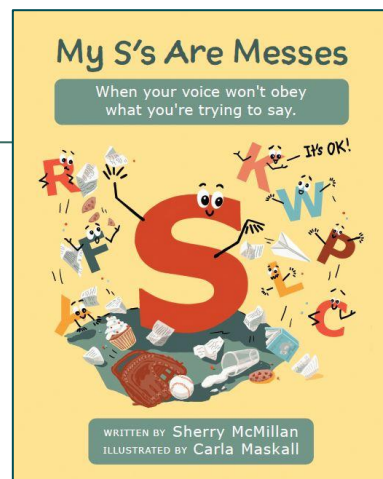
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Did you Know? There are lots of famous people who have a speech difference. Some of them are even famous because they have such **WONDERFUL VOICES!**

Do you know of any famous people who have a speech difference? Or do you know of someone in your life who also has (or used to have) a speech difference?

Have an adult help you search for interesting people that have (or used to have) a speech difference. **TIP:** Some of them are even famous performers!



A DIFFERENCE IS JUST A DIFFERENCE.



James Earl Jones

James Earl Jones is an actor who's famous for his voice; he even provided the voice of Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* movies. Jones has a stutter, and he has said that his stutter was so severe as a child that he almost stopped speaking altogether. However, he eventually overcame his stutter with the help of speech therapy.



Tiger Woods

The professional golfer has a stutter that he has struggled with since childhood. He says that stress can trigger his stutter and that he sometimes has to take deep breaths to control it. However, he has never let his stutter stop him from achieving success in his career.



Daniel Radcliffe

The actor who played Harry Potter in the "Harry Potter" movies has a mild form of dyspraxia, which is a motor speech disorder. This means that he sometimes has difficulty pronouncing certain sounds. However, his dyspraxia hasn't prevented him from becoming a successful actor.

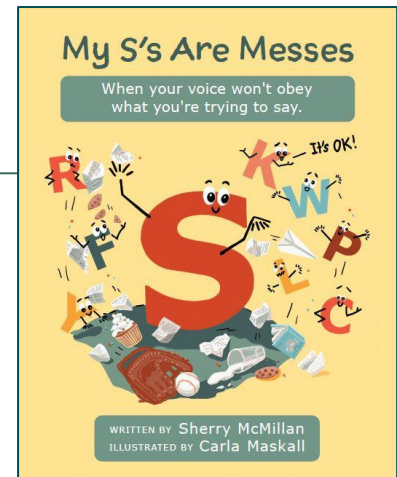
Source: [How to Overcome a Speech Impediment — or Thrive in Spite of It \(yoodli.ai\)](#)

My S's Are Messes

Companion Resources for Kids

IT'S OK!

The author of *My S's Are Messes* has several speech differences. She has a lateral lisp and several articulation errors (j's, k's, and x's are the hardest!) She also sometimes stutters, clusters, or just can't make the words at all. But she is also a professional speaker and loves going to schools to talk to classrooms about having speech differences.



Did you know?

- About 40% of all children will have some sort of speech difference at some point in their childhood. About 5% of us have that difference for our entire lives.
- About 5-10% of all children will stutter at some point in their childhood.
- It's really hard to make a sound you haven't heard (fully). And we hear it best once we've made the sound ourselves.
 - That's why babies babble so much!
 - The way we hear ourselves make a sound is different from the way we hear others say it.

Fun things you can do with *My S's Are Messes*

- You can look at the pictures in the book. Each one describes what it feels like for the author to have speech sounds differences.
 - **Can you draw a picture of what it feels like for you?**
 - **Can you draw a picture of what you would like it to feel like?**
- You can read the book and then think about the sounds that 'misbehave' for you.
 - **Look for that sound in the book. Can you find it?** Was it hiding or was it easy to find?
 - **Can you write your own poetry verse about that sound?** Can you make it rhyme?
 - **Can you turn a verse (or the whole book) into a song?** TIP: Sometimes singing helps us say difficult sounds. It can also be really fun!

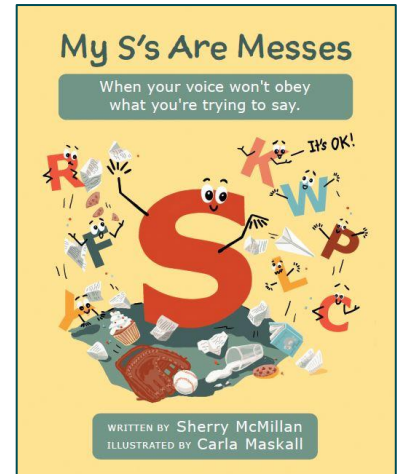
Can you think of other fun things to do with the book? You can share ideas with the author by having a grown-up help you send an email to info@sherrymcmillan.ca

My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Kids

NO BULLIES ALLOWED!

It's NOT OK for anyone to tease you about how you speak. If someone is mimicking you (copying how you speak in a way that doesn't feel good), calling you names, or making you feel bad about your speech differences, you can talk with a grown-up. They will help you know what to do the next time. They may also talk to the bully or help your entire class understand more about speech differences and how we can all be good to each other.



BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF!

Sometimes when we have challenges, the hardest part is to be kind and patient with ourselves! Remember all the things you find fun and easy. Remember that there are lots of ways to communicate. And remember that “there’s no mistaking how we feel when we speak heart to heart”. You might also want to try planting your feet firmly, taking a few deep, strong, breaths and trying again. It always helps me!

Most people are patient
They don't mind to wait



But some tap their toes

Like I'm making them late.



My S's Are Messes

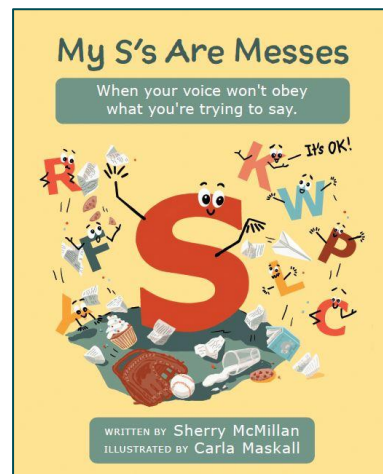
Companion Resource for Kids

GOING TO SPEECH THERAPY

A Speech Language Pathologist (SLP for short) is sometimes also called a Speech Therapist.

Speech Therapy is a special kind of a class where an SLP will teach you. Usually, you will be the only student in that class.

Your SLP will have all sorts of ideas on how to help you hear and say sounds correctly and more easily.



YOUR BIGGEST FAN!

Remember, an SLP is someone who spent YEARS learning how to help children just like you! They've helped lots of people before! **And they are also World Champion Listeners** just like you!

I can listen like a pro
I hear things you don't even say



And if my sounds came easily
It wouldn't be this way.



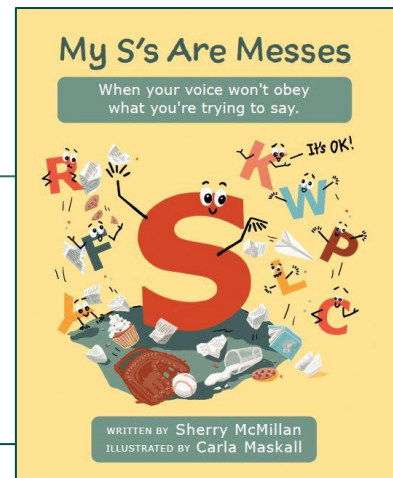
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GOING TO SPEECH THERAPY

Are you curious about Speech Therapy?

Here's what it might be like:



- **You might see the SLP at your school.** They might ask you to leave class and join them for time together with just the two of you to work on your sounds.
 - Or, you might see the SLP outside of your school day instead.
- **Your SLP will be very interested in how you make sounds.** They might:
 - Have you practice some sounds while they look really closely at your mouth.
 - They might use a mirror to look at your mouth and tongue.
 - They might want to touch your face lightly. This can be because they want to feel how your jaw works when you make certain sounds.
- **Your SLP will show you how THEY make sounds.** They might ask you to pay really close attention to their tongue, lips, and other parts of their mouth.
- **They might record you making sounds and then play it back to you.** It can be hard to hear yourself. That's OK! Think of how your favourite athlete listens to their coach and watches themselves on a replay!
- **Sometimes, your SLP might be silly and make you laugh!** Sometimes, they might be serious and think really hard about how best to help you.
- **Sometimes, they might want you to say the same sound over and over again.** This can be difficult or frustrating or boring. That's OK. You can tell your SLP how you feel and they will understand.
- **Your SLP might use cards, or games, or books** to help you with your sounds.
- **They will tell you when you're saying it right and help you understand what that feels like.**

**Speech Therapy can be hard work.
But it can also be really fun and helpful!**

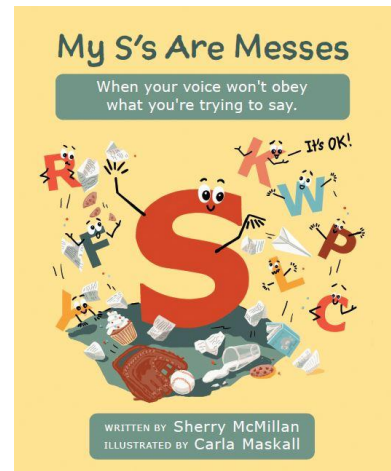
My S's Are Messes

Companion Resources for Kids

GOING TO SPEECH THERAPY

Sometimes, it can feel a bit strange to have Speech Therapy. Sometimes the room the SLP works in might be a little small or they might need to sit very close to you to help you.

There might be some simple things that would REALLY help you, but your grown-ups might not know unless you ask. **Remember, you have a full team helping you!**



YOU CAN ASK

- If the lights can be softer or brighter.
- For the door to be closed or open.
- If (both of) you can brush your teeth or have a mint.
- If you can have a blanket, stuffie, or a favourite toy with you.
- If you can bring a friend or have a parent or other favourite grown-up stay with you.
- If you can hold a fidget-spinner, squeezie ball, or anything else that helps you concentrate.
- If you're called away from class to go to Speech Therapy, you can tell your grown-ups if there's a way that you like, or don't like, for that to happen.
- If you can sit on the floor, or in a different chair, or if you can stand instead.
- You may even be able to go outside for your speech therapy. You may be able to sit at a bench at the school or go for a walk around the grounds while you do your speech therapy. (Sometimes it helps to move your body!)
- Is there something else you think might help? You can ask! And, if you don't feel comfortable asking your SLP, you can ask your parent, care-giver, or teacher first. They might not be able to do everything you ask, but they want you to be comfortable.