

What is a language disorder?

A language disorder is difficulty with any of the following parts of language:

Semantics (Vocabulary): the meaning of words and relationship between words

Morphology (Grammar): the rules for structuring language

Syntax: the order of words in a sentence

Difficulties with phonology and pragmatics (social language) can also fall under this category. Having difficulty with speaking is highly correlated with having difficulty with writing and reading (ASHA).

Example challenges:

- Communicating Wants and Needs
- Understanding Directions
- Describing
- Retelling a Story
- Comprehension
- Making Grammatically Correct Sentences
- Figurative Language

What does therapy look like?

Therapy sessions for language will look different depending on the age and the skills that are being targeted. Contextualized therapy, where skills are being taught in the same context they would be used, has shown to be a very effective therapy approach (Gilliam & Gilliam, 2012). An example of this would be narrative based therapy, where books are used during a therapy session to teach language skills that a student uses in the classroom.

Therapy sessions for younger students may also be play based to increase participation and engagement.

Brandel, J. (2014). *Making Evidence-Based Decisions Regarding Service Delivery for School-Age Students Participating in Narrative Intervention*. 13.
 Gilliam, S. L., Gilliam, R. B., & Reece, K. (2012). Language outcomes of contextualized and decontextualized language intervention: Results of an early efficacy study. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 43(3), 276–291. [https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461\(2011/11-0022\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2011/11-0022))
 Spoken Language Disorders. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/spoken-language-disorders/>
 Written Language Disorders. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/written-language-disorders/>

WHAT CAN WE DO?

AT HOME

You don't need to add activities to your already stressful day, just add language during daily tasks!

Model: Talk about what you're doing and model what your student might say.

Recast: Take what your student says and say that sentence back expanding it to be longer and have more complex grammar.

Visuals: If there is a lot to look at, use that as a time for language exposure. Going to the grocery store and playing at the park are great examples.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Many of the strategies used for students with language difficulties can be used as universal supports in the classroom.

Model: Talk about what you're doing and model what your students might say.

Recast: Take what your students say and say a sentence back that is longer and with more complex grammar.

Visuals: Use graphic organizers and have a visual example of assignments.

Be Concise: Use concise wording and have classroom expectations be very clear and up front.

Check for Understanding: Have students give a thumbs up/middle/down or have a signal light system on their desk as a visual way to check for understanding.

SUPPORTS

Research has shown that push in lessons are a great way to promote the generalization of skills in the classroom and an embedded way to collaborate with the classroom teacher. This is also a great way to model so that teachers know what type of additional language supports and strategies may be helpful for students with language difficulties. (Brandal, 2014)