

What is a Speech Sound Disorder?

When a student has difficulty saying their speech sounds it's called a speech sound disorder.

Articulation disorder:

- Difficulty with being able move the muscles and articulators in our mouth (ex: lips, tongue) a certain way to make sounds
- Example: lisp

Phonological disorder:

- The student replaces sounds with another sound, often in a pattern
- Student has difficulty with being able to hear the sound and match it to the target sound
- Example: being able to hear the /k/ sound and recognize it as a /k/ sound and saying a /t/ sound instead
- May also have difficulty with being able to identify and change the sounds we hear in words
- For example being able to say there is a /b/ sound in the beginning of "bear" and that if you replace /b/ with /t/ you get "tear"

Apraxia:

- Difficulty with the signal our brain sends to our muscles and articulators (lips, tongue) to make sounds
- Students have a difficult time making speech sounds even with lots of visuals and modeling

Other:

- Sounds can also be difficult to produce due to structural reasons (ex: cleft palate), brain injury, and difficulty with hearing

What does therapy look like?

Sessions will focus on getting as many correct speech sounds as possible. The speech-language pathologist (SLP) will use a different therapy approach depending on the sounds in error, pattern of errors, student's personality, family input, and other factors. Research shows that it's not the amount of time in a session, it's the number of times a target sound is made correctly that counts! (Byers et. al., 2021).

Byers Beth A., Bellon-Harrn Monica L., Allen Madeline, Saar Karen Whisenhunt, Manchaiah Vinaya, & Rodrigo Hansapani. (2021). A Comparison of Intervention Intensity and Service Delivery Models With School-Age Children With Speech Sound Disorders in a School Setting. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 52(2), 529–541. https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_LSHSS-20-00057

Farquharson, K., Centanni, T. M., Franzluebbers, C. E., & Hogan, T. P. (2014). Phonological and lexical influences on phonological awareness in children with specific language impairment and dyslexia. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 838. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00838>

Speech Sound Disorders: Articulation and Phonology. (n.d.). American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Retrieved August 20, 2021, from <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/articulation-and-phonology/>

WHAT CAN WE DO?

AT HOME

Model sounds at home when you hear the error. Example: If your student says "I want the blue wabbit", you can say, "You want the blue Rabbit?" putting emphasis on the /r/ sound.

If you would like to practice at home, you can ask your SLP for speech homework.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Target phonological awareness for the sound error. Keep an eye out for students that write the error the way they say it. If you notice this, let your SLP know! Speech sound disorders are highly correlated to difficulty with reading. (Farquharson et. al., 2014)

Model: You can also model the sound by emphasizing the correct way to say it. Example: If your student says "I want the blue wabbit", you can say, "You want the blue Rabbit?" putting emphasis on the /r/ sound.

SUPPORTS

Students can be involved in picking which words are the hardest for them to say. They can also ask to work on words they are self conscious about or that are important to them. If they are too young to pick them out, a family member can help!