
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS



DEFINITIONS:

Speech disorders refer to difficulties producing speech sounds or problems with voice quality.

Language disorders refer to impairments in the ability to understand and/or use words in context, both verbally, and nonverbally.

POSSIBLE CAUSES:

- Hearing loss
- Neurological disorders
- Muscular disorders
- Developmental delays
- Brain injury
- Mental retardation
- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- Drug abuse
- Vocal abuse or misuse
- Physical impairments such as: cleft lip or palate; or paralysis of, absence of lesions or nodules on the vocal cords

POSSIBLE SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND CHARACTERISTICS:

- Speech and/or language skills that are noticeably behind their peers
- Partial or total loss of the voice
- Interruptions in the flow or rhythm of speech such as stuttering
- Articulation or phonological disorders
- Difficulties in the pitch, volume, or quality of the voice
- Improper use of words and their meanings
- Inability to express ideas
- Inappropriate grammatical patterns
- Reduced vocabulary
- Inability to follow directions

TEACHING TIPS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Develop a method with which the student can summon the teacher or a classmate in case of an emergency.
- Do not underestimate the student's intelligence or physical ability.
- If necessary, use other forms of communication such as sign language, symbols, sign cards, chalkboards, or communication boards.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.