



Fact Sheet

Developed by The Center for Disability Studies and Universal Access

Speech Language Disabilities

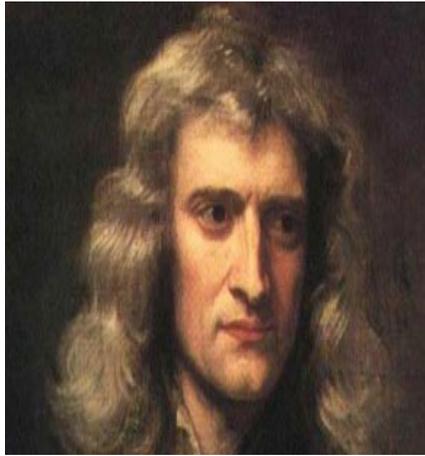
Quick Facts

Speech disorders refer to difficulties producing speech sounds or problems with voice quality. They might be characterized by an interruption in the flow or rhythm of speech, such as stuttering, which is called dysfluency. Speech disorders may be problems with the way sounds are formed, called articulation or phonological disorders, or they may be difficulties with the pitch, volume or quality of the voice.

A language disorder is an impairment in the ability to understand and/or use words in context, verbally or non-verbally. Some characteristics of language disorders include improper use of words and their meanings, inability to express ideas, inappropriate grammatical patterns, reduced vocabulary and inability to follow directions. Some manifestations include hearing or seeing words but not being able to understand its meaning.

Effects on learning

Communication skills are essential to academic success and learning. Language is the basis of communication. Reading, writing, gesturing, listening, and speaking are all forms of language. Learning takes place through the process of communication. The ability to communicate with peers and adults in educational settings is essential for students to succeed in school.



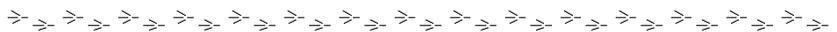
Sir Isaac Newton was a severe stutterer, a common form of speech and language

Causes

Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas such as oral motor function. These delays and disorders range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech and feeding. Some causes of speech and language disorders include hearing loss, neurological disorders, brain injury, intellectual impairment, drug abuse, physical impairments such as cleft lip or palate.

Successful Classroom Strategies

- Listen patiently to efforts to communicate. Concentrate on what the person is saying, not on how he/she is saying it. Show respect for contributions.
- Look for facial, hand, and other responses that supplement speech as a method of communication.
- Speak clearly and not too rapidly so the person can understand you.
- Don't be afraid to say you didn't understand what someone said. Let the person know you will take time to make sure you understand.
- Realize that speech abilities may vary with changes in mood, health, and stress and that they can improve. As a person experiences successes and develops competence, he or she will likely become more willing to communicate.
- Help members feel comfortable participating in class. Some members may be unable to speak at all, but they may be willing to share written passages or pictures they have drawn that relate to the activity.
- Use many pictures, photographs, objects, and other visual aids.
- Utilize technology such as Dragon Naturally Speaking. More...>



Auditory Processing Disorder

Auditory processing is a term used to describe what happens when the brain recognizes and interprets the sounds around you. Humans hear when energy that we recognize as sound travels through the ear and is changed into electrical information that can be interpreted by the brain. The "disorder" part of auditory processing disorder means that something is adversely affecting the processing or interpretation of the information.

Students with APD often do not recognize subtle differences between sounds in words, even though the sounds themselves are loud and clear. For example, the request "Tell me how a chair and a couch are alike" may sound to a child with APD like "Tell me how a couch and a chair are alike." It can even be understood by the student as "Tell me how a cow and a hair are alike." These kinds of problems are more likely to occur when a person with APD is in a noisy environment or when he or she is listening to complex information.

Classroom Strategies Continued

- Record lectures and lessons for playback at home during study and homework sessions;
- Have a peer, or other appropriate person paraphrase instructions in writing or on tape;
- Simplify words in text. Paraphrase by eliminating non-essential words and phrases, and double negatives;
- Help the person summarize what he has read and write it down in brief, easy-to-understand terms;
- Provide examples of good work, and point out features of the work that contribute to its quality. Check to ensure the student understands what characteristics distinguish good work from poor work;
- Break large reading assignments into smaller sections;
- Note the most important parts of text and instructions. Use a highlighter, and write these down in simple, concise terms;
- Create a study guide that includes key vocabulary with definitions, guiding questions, and a clear statement of learning goals for the reading or task;
- Make liberal use of visual models, pictures, videos, computer generated models, or any other means available to allow students to use their visual reasoning skills to understand materials and to express their own understanding.
- Allow for multiple ways to demonstrate competency.

Resources and Further Information



National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
National Institutes of Health
31 Center Drive, MSC 2320
Bethesda, MD USA 20892-2320
E-mail: nidcdinfo@nidcd.nih.gov

ASHA National Office
220 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289301-296-5700

The Center for Disability Studies
Eastern Washington University
Senior 121
Cheney, WA 99004
509-359-4584

About us...

Our Office was developed with the support of a Department of Education Grant, *Supporting Students with Disabilities through Professional Faculty Development and Student Curriculum*. We are committed to improving the educational environment for students with disabilities and believe that an effective way to reach our goals is to promote an environment of **Universal Education Access (UEA)** to all people regardless of background or characteristics.