

Indicators for a Speech Therapy Referral

Here are some indicators to help you determine if your child needs a speech evaluation. Early detection can lead to early intervention which can reduce or eliminate further challenges. Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) can help with language, speech, fluency (stuttering), voice, feeding, and social communication skills.

**Please note: Consideration should be given that this is not an all-inclusive list and that skills development occurs in a range of time.*

Language: If individual cannot or does not...

- Babble (6 months)
- Use gestures, such as waving or pointing (9-12 months)
- Understand names of at least 10 familiar objects (12 months)
- Have an approximate expressive vocabulary of 50 words at 18 months
- Answer simple questions (2-3 years)
- Asks simple questions, such as "What's that?" or "Where...?" (2-3 years)
- Follow 2 step directions (3-4 years)

Speech: If individual cannot or does not...

- Imitate new words or oral movements
- Have 50% intelligible speech by 2-3 years; 90% by 5 years

Fluency (stuttering): If individual does the following:

- Excessive repetition of first sounds of words—"b-b-b-bike" (3 years)
- Repeats words multiple times in a sentence (3 years)
- Stretches out sounds in words—"s-s-s-s-see" (3 years)

Voice: If individual uses...

- A hoarse, rough, or breathy voice
- A nasal sounding voice

Feeding: If individual...

- Has excessive drooling or loss of food/liquid from mouth (18 months)
- Is an extremely picky eater (only eats specific foods)
- Has difficulty transitioning from baby foods to textured (lumpy) foods or to table foods
- Coughs/chokes during drinking or eating. Sounds like she needs to clear her throat (gurgles)
- Is frequently ill with respiratory infections or pneumonias
- Will only drink through a bottle and will not transition to a cup

Social Communication: Individual cannot or does not...

- Show awareness of own and other's feelings (3 years)
- Introduce topics in conversation or use verbal turn taking (3 years)
- Notice nonverbal cues and changes own words or actions as a result (4-5 years)
- Repair a conversational breakdown (4 years)