**Lesson 13 : Speech-Language Impairments**

**Definition of Speech or Language Impairment (SLI):**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act defines an SLI:

As a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairments, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association defines a communication disorder as “an impairment in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal, and graphic symbols systems. A communication disorder may be evident in the processes of hearing, language, and/or speech.”

The IDEA WORDING for students with communication difficulties is speech and language impairment and they are eligible for special education if they have “a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment, which adversely affect a child’s educational performance

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**Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD**):

Difficulty processing (using and interpreting) sounds. CAPD occurs when the ear and brain do not work smoothly together to interpret sounds.[[2]](#footnote-3)

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is an umbrella term.

Children and young people with SCLN may have difficulty with any or many aspects of communication. These can include difficulties with:

* Fluency
* Forming sounds and words
* Formulating sentences
* Understanding what other say
* Using language socially. [[3]](#footnote-4)

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDER means:

* Speech
* Language
* Communication
* Articulation of sound
* Co-ordination of the tongue, teeth, soft and hard palates, abdominal muscles and breath to produce sound.
* Speech involves language because you have to have a thought to articulate and then be able to construct this thought into words.
* Language is a rule governed process and incorporates the following aspects: grammar (syntax), meaning (semantics), use (pragmatics), vocabulary.
* Thinking
* Remembering: working memory, long term memory
* Reasoning
* Predicting
* Language without speech e.g. writing, sign language. [[4]](#footnote-5)
* Use of language and or speech to convey a message to other people.
* 93% of information transmitted in conversation is done so non-verbally.
* Consider also the use of intonation (prosody) and how this changes meaning.
* Difficulties in reading non verbal communication are a key feature of ASD and SEBD.
* Communication requires a sender and receiver.
* Receiver – needs to be able to receive it in the first place. They need to hear, listen and understand the message and then show they have understood it through their response.
* Sender – needs opportunities to communicate, an ability to formulate a message in thought and to then convey the message in an appropriate form. [[5]](#footnote-6)
* **Delay** is when language development follows a normal pattern of development but at a slower rate (chart of stages of language development).
* **Disorder** is where development is different in form or function from other children.[[6]](#footnote-7)

More than one million students who receive special education services under IDEA in public schools are served under that category of speech or language impairments.

Because many disabilities do impact the individuals ability to communicate, the actual incidence of children with SLI is much higher. [[7]](#footnote-8)

**CAUSES OF SPEECH DISORDER:**

Most of the cases cause are unknown.

* Hearing Loss
* Neurological Disorders
* Muscular Disorders
* Developmental Delays
* Intellectual Disability.
* Brain Injury
* Mental Retardation
* Autism
* Cerebral Palsy
* Drug Abuse
* Vocal Abuse or Misuse
* Physical Impairments (ex. Cleft Palate). [[8]](#footnote-9)
* Family history.
* Premature birth.
* Low birth-weight.
* Syndromes like Down syndrome.
* Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. [[9]](#footnote-10)

**Characteristics of Speech or Language Impairments:**

* The characteristics of speech or language impairments will vary depending upon the type of
* impairment involved. There may also be a combination of several problems.
* When a child has an **articulation disorder**, he or she hasdifficulty making certain sounds.
* These sounds may be left off, added, changed, or distorted, which makes it hard for people to understand the child.
* Leaving out or changing certain sounds is common when young children are learning to talk, of course. A good example of this is saying “wabbit” for “rabbit.” The incorrect articulation isn’t necessarily a cause for concern unless it continues past the age where children are expected to produce such sounds correctly.
* Fluency refers to the flow of speech. A **fluency disorder** means that something is disrupting
* the rhythmic and forward flow of speech—usually, a stutter.
* As a result, the child’s speech contains an “abnormal number of repetitions, hesitations,
* prolongations, or disturbances.
* Tension may also be seen in the face, neck, shoulders, or fists.”
* Voice is the sound that’s produced when air from the lungs pushes through the voice box in the throat (also called the larnyx), making the vocal folds within vibrate. From there, the sound generated travels up through the spaces of the throat, nose, and mouth, and emerges as our “voice.” A **voice disorder** involves problems with the pitch, loudness, resonance, or quality of the voice. The voice may be hoarse, raspy, or harsh.
* For some, it may sound quite nasal; others might seem as if they are “stuffed up.” People with voice problems often notice changes in pitch, loss of voice, loss of endurance, and sometimes a sharp or dull pain associated with voice use
* Language has to do with meanings, rather than sounds.
* A **language disorder** refers to an impaired ability to understand and/or use words in context.
* A child may have an expressive language disorder (difficulty in expressing ideas or needs), a receptive language disorder (difficulty in understanding what others are saying), or a mixed
* language disorder (which involves both).[[10]](#footnote-11)

1. Tricia Hansen: **Speech-Language Impairments** , Oklahoma State Department of Education

   Instruction and Related Services Specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ritchard.M Gargiuilo : **Special education in contemporary society** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Do luchd-ionnsachaidh na h-Alba, le luchd-foghlaim Alba: Introduction to Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Informed Level [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Catherine Pass **: An Introduction to Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties** , **IDP SLCN Network Day** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Catherine Pass **: An Introduction to Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties** , **IDP SLCN Network Day** [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Catherine Pass **: An Introduction to Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties** , **IDP SLCN Network Day** [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Tricia Hansen: **Speech-Language Impairments** , Oklahoma State Department of Education

   Instruction and Related Services Specialist [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Ritchard.M Gargiuilo : **Special education in contemporary society** [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Hallahan,D.P & Kauffman,T.M.,1988.Exceptional children. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliff, New Jersey. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. NICHCY : Speech-Language Impairments , January 2011, P03 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)