

## **Standards for Special Education Evaluation & Eligibility**

**The following standards for special education evaluation and eligibility shall be effective July 1, 2017.**

### **SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT**

#### **I. Definition**

A Speech or Language Impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Speech or Language Impairment includes demonstration of impairments in one (1) or more of the following areas of language, articulation, voice, or fluency.

- (1) Language Impairment – A significant deficiency in comprehension and/or use of spoken language that may also impair written and/or other symbol systems and is negatively impacting the child's ability to participate in the classroom environment. The impairment may involve any or a combination of the following: the form of language (phonology, morphology, and syntax), the content of language (semantics) and/or the use of language in communication (pragmatics) that is adversely affecting the child's educational performance.
- (2) Articulation (Speech Sound Production) Impairment – A significant deficiency in the ability to produce sounds in conversational speech not consistent with chronological age. This includes a significant atypical production of speech sounds characterized by substitutions, omissions, additions, or distortions that interfere with intelligibility in conversational speech and obstructs learning and successful verbal communication in the educational setting. Speech sound errors may be a result of impaired phonology, oral motor or other issues.
- (3) Voice Impairment – An excess or significant deficiency in pitch, intensity, resonance, or quality resulting from pathological conditions or inappropriate use of the vocal mechanism.
- (4) Fluency Impairment – Abnormal interruption in the flow of speech characterized by an atypical rate, or rhythm, and/or repetitions in sounds, syllables, words and phrases that significantly reduces the speaker's ability to participate within the learning environment.

Speech or Language deficiencies identified cannot be attributed to characteristics of second language acquisition, cognitive referencing, and/or dialectic differences.

#### **II. Evaluation**

The characteristics as identified in the Speech or Language Definition are present.

#### **Evaluation Procedures**

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A comprehensive evaluation performed by a multidisciplinary team using a variety of sources of information that are sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and environmental factors or sensory impairments to include the following:

- (1) Language Impairment -significant deficiency in the student's comprehension, form, content or use of language shall be determined by:
  - (a) Hearing screening;
  - (b) A minimum of one comprehensive standardized measure of receptive and expressive language (vocabulary, syntax, morphology, mean length of utterance, syntax, semantics, morphology) that falls at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean, with consideration to the assessment's standard error of measurement. This could be based on the test as a whole or the composite receptive/expressive language scores. Individual subtest scores shall not be used;
  - (c) An additional standardized measure to support identified areas of delay that fall at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean with consideration to the assessment's standard error of measure;
  - (d) Pragmatics (if identified as an area of concern);
  - (e) Auditory perception: selective attention, discrimination, memory, sequencing, association, and integration;
  - (f) Teacher checklist;
  - (g) Parent Input; and
  - (h) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment (to include the severity rating scale), of how the Language Impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).
- (2) Articulation (Speech Sound Production) Impairment – a significant deficiency in articulation shall be determined by all of the following:
  - (a) Hearing screening;

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- (b) Articulation error(s) persisting at least 1 year behind expectancy compared to current developmental norms (see state approved norms in guidance document);
  - (c) An appropriate standardized instrument to include phonetic inventory (required) and assessment of phonological processes (as appropriate). See state approved norms in guidance document;
  - (d) Evidence that the child's scores are at a moderate, severe, or profound rating (i.e., severity rating scale);
  - (e) Teacher checklist/input;
  - (f) Parent input;
  - (g) Stimulability probes;
  - (h) Oral peripheral examination;
  - (i) Analysis of phoneme production in conversational speech; and
  - (j) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Articulation Impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).
- (3) Voice Impairment – evaluation of vocal characteristics shall include the following:
- (a) Hearing screening;
  - (b) Examination by an otolaryngologist;
  - (c) Oral peripheral examination; and
  - (d) Documentation, including observation and/or assessment, of how Voice Impairment adversely affects his/her educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).
- (4) Fluency Impairment – evaluation of fluency shall include the following:

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- (a) Hearing screening;
- (b) Information obtained from parents, students, and teacher(s) regarding non-fluent behaviors/attitudes across communication situations;
- (c) Oral peripheral examination; and
- (d) Documentation, including observations across multiple settings and/or assessment, of how Fluency Impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance in his/her learning environment and the need for specialized instruction and related services (i.e., to include academic and/or nonacademic areas).

### **Evaluation Participants**

Information shall be gathered from the following persons in the evaluation of a Speech or Language Impairment:

- (1) The parent;
- (2) The child's general education classroom teacher;
- (3) A licensed speech-language pathologist;
- (4) A licensed otolaryngologist (for voice impairments only); and
- (5) Other professional personnel (e.g.; school psychologist), as indicated.