



# Let's Talk

## Speech and Language Services in the Schools

“ In second grade, our daughter Clarice was having trouble reading in school, using the correct word endings, and saying some sounds that other children her age were able to say. Her teacher said that Clarice was difficult to understand and was not participating fully in class. She already received extra help within the classroom but still could not pass the grade-level tests. ”

—Stacy and Scott

Does your child need extra help in school? Does she have problems following directions? Do other people have a hard time understanding your child? Your child can get help under a law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

### How Can I Get These Services for My Child?

If your child is older than 3 years but not in school yet, contact the school your child will be attending.

If your child is in school, talk to her classroom teacher. The teacher might be able to help your child in the classroom.

If your child needs more help, a team of professionals can help. This team can include:

- You
- Your child's teacher
- The school principal
- A special educator
- A psychologist
- A speech-language pathologist, or SLP

The team will talk with you to learn about your child. You, the teacher, or other people in the school can ask that your child be tested. Under the law, this is called being evaluated. You will be asked first for permission. This is a form you need to sign to say it is okay to evaluate your child.

If you speak a language other than English in the home, tell your child's team. Your child will be evaluated to see if he needs special

### Fast facts

- Children receive free special education services in the schools under federal law.
- You are part of the team deciding about your child's program.
- Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.



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help in school. Children who need help in speech and language will work with an SLP. The SLP will watch your child in the classroom to see if he:

- Has a hard time learning
- Gets along with other children
- Answers questions
- Can be understood by the teacher and other children
- Follows directions
- Is having trouble learning to read and write
- Has difficulty hearing

If the SLP feels that your child needs services and you agree, the team will write a plan to help. This is called an IEP, or an individualized education program.

### What Is the IEP?

The team will make a plan to help your child in school. All team members play an equal part in making the IEP. You will be part of that team. The IEP must set goals that:

- Help your child's needs
- Can be measured so that you can see how well your child is doing
- Can be met during a school year

Services must be provided for free. The school can't tell you that it can't give services to your child because they are too expensive or it doesn't have an SLP.

If your child needs more than speech and language help, other professionals can work with your child.

“Clarice was evaluated by the SLP and was found to need help with her speech and language. She saw the SLP once a week to practice saying her sounds. The SLP also worked with her in the classroom to help her with her reading. Now, we and her teacher and friends can understand Clarice better, and she is answering questions and speaking more in class. Her reading is also improving.”

—Stacy and Scott

### Speech and language disorders can change your child's life. Help is available.

To learn more about IDEA or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) or call **800-638-8255** or (TTY) **301-296-5650**. Or visit the Department of Education on the Web at <http://idea.ed.gov/>.

My SLP's name is

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Appointment

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Compliments of  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)  
and