



Speech-Language Pathology

Early Intervention

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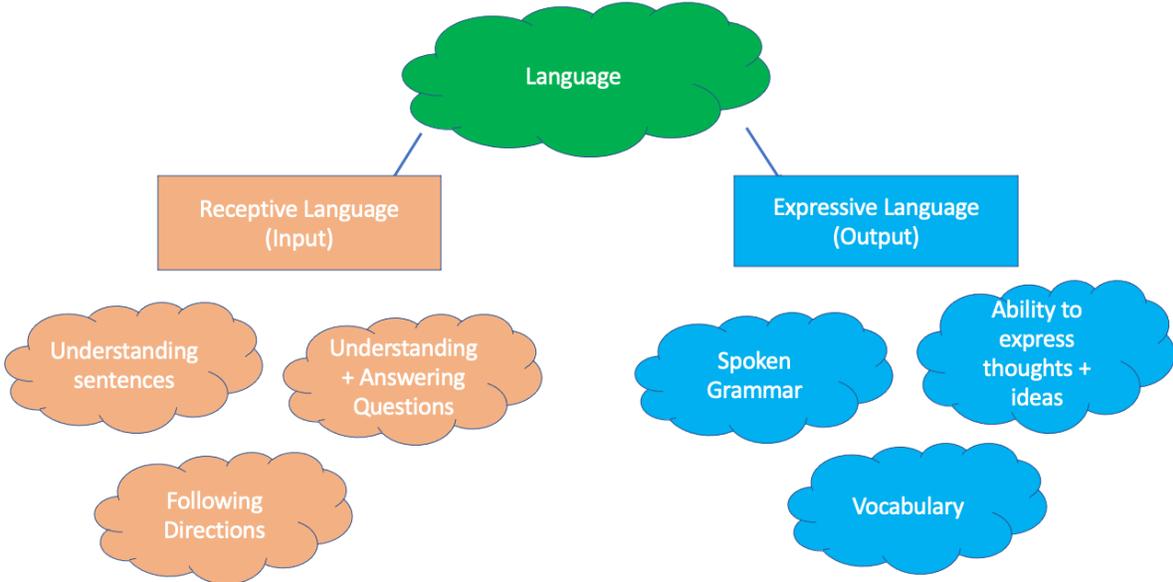
What is a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)?

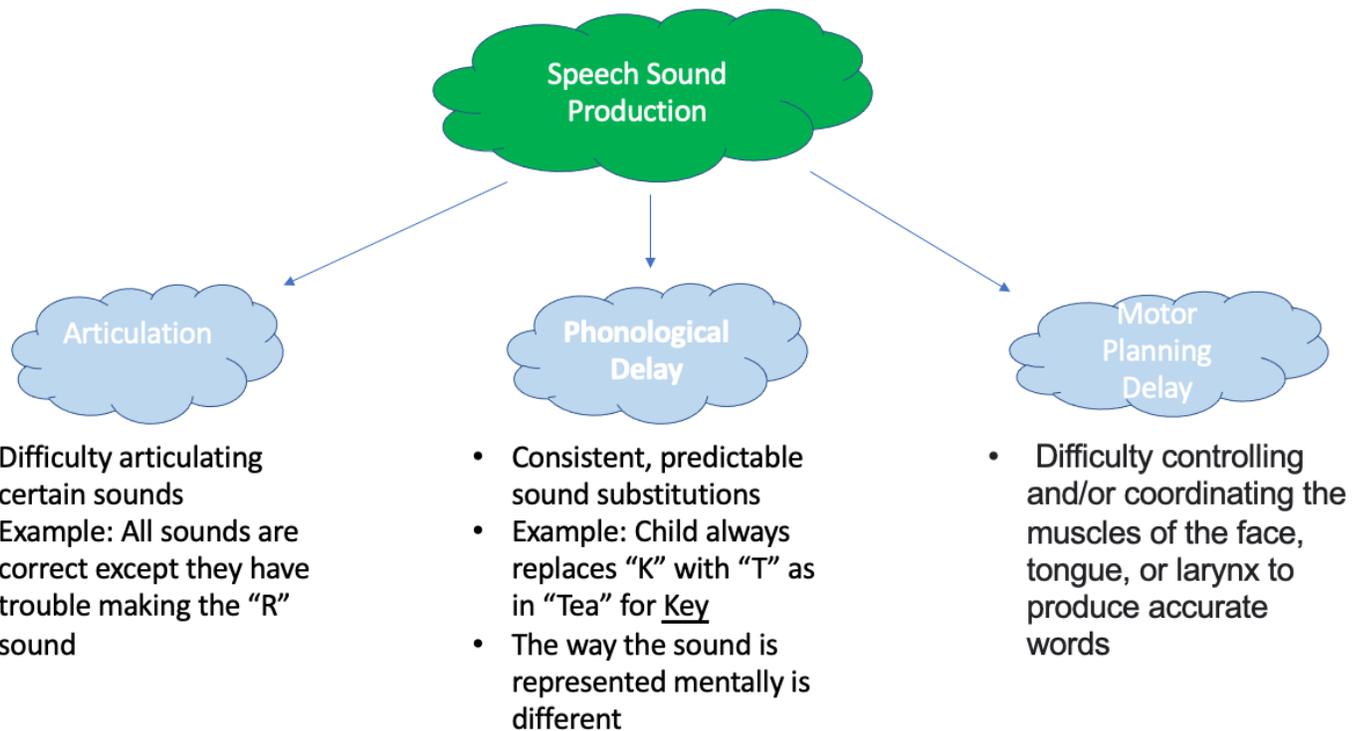
Speech-Language Pathologists are specialists in communication. In the preschool setting, we help with:

- ❖ Speech sound delays (articulation, phonology and motor speech delays)
- ❖ Language delays (receptive and/or expressive)
- ❖ Social-communication challenges
- ❖ Fluency disorders such as stuttering
- ❖ Pre-literacy and literacy skills (such as phonological awareness)

Why is Early Intervention important?

- ❖ The first five years are a critical period for learning and growth
- ❖ This is when the brain is developing the most rapidly and the neural circuits are most flexible. Overtime, these become increasingly difficult to change.
- ❖ Intervention is likely to be **more effective** and **less costly** when provided earlier in life.
- ❖ Treating communication and language difficulties early on can prevent potential problems with behaviour, learning, reading and social interaction.
- ❖ Children with speech sound delays are at an increased risk of difficulties with early literacy skills, which are critical skills for reading and writing.





Key Components to SLP Support in the Classroom

- 1. Educational Assistant and Teacher Collaboration**
 - ❖ Provide consistency & routine
 - ❖ Frequent opportunity to practice new skills
 - ❖ Carryover from 1:1 sessions into the classroom
- 2. Visual Supports in place**
 - ❖ Provide structure and predictability
 - ❖ Improve understanding & vocabulary
 - ❖ Reduce frustration
 - ❖ Provide opportunity for the child to make choices
- 3. One to One SLP Visits**
 - ❖ Play-based, fun and engaging
 - ❖ Introduce new skills in a 1:1 setting free of distractions
 - ❖ Intensive practice to solidify the skill

SLP Support at Home

- ❖ **Know what your child is working on.** Reach out to the SLP if you are not sure.
- ❖ **Repetition is key!** Children need to be exposed to a word or concept 15+ times before they learn it
- ❖ The best way to practice with your child is **short & often** (5 minutes, every day)
- ❖ **Your SLP will suggest ideas** of how to use the practice material, try it! Let them know if it doesn't work for you and they will suggest an alternative way to practice.
- ❖ **Provide a model for your child** as much as they need (e.g. you do it first, they imitate)
- ❖ **Get down to their level** so that you are eye-to-eye when practicing any goals
- ❖ **Use favourite books, games and toys** to highlight vocabulary words or practice speech sounds that they are working on.
- ❖ **Practice following directions** during everyday tasks with the aim of increasing independence:
 - Follow recipes with children
 - Involve children in chores such as:
 - Help put clothes into the dryer
 - Help wipe the counter or floor with a cloth dust pan and brush
 - Help empty the dishwasher
 - Water the flowers
- ❖ **Offer choices** whenever possible
 - Would you like to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt? Do you want to use a fork or a spoon? Would you like to go to the library or the park today?
- ❖ When asking about their day, **use specific questions**
 - Instead of "What did you do today?" ask "Did you make a craft today? Did you go outside today?" etc.
- ❖ **Less is more!** Simplify your language.
 - When giving directions, use short, concise sentences
 - "First take your shoes off, then wash your hands"

Visit [Talk Box Alberta](#) for more information about your child's communication and ideas of how to increase language skills at home.

Language Milestones

Your 3 year old...

- Says 3 to 4 words together, like *I want more juice* and *Mommy is at work*.
- Uses more of the little words like *is, a, the*.
- Follows 3-part directions, like *Go to your room, get your socks, and bring them to me*.
- Understands and asks questions, like *Where is your coat?, Who's that?* and *What is soap for?*
- Describes activities, feelings and problems, and tells simple stories.

Your 4 year old...

- Uses sentences that are longer and more complete, such as "I want to go out and play on the swing."
- Uses more grammar, like pronouns (*I, you, me, she, he, we*), past tense (*walked*), and some question words (*what, who, where, why*). There are still some errors.

- Understands most concept words like *colours, shapes, locations, texture, time*.

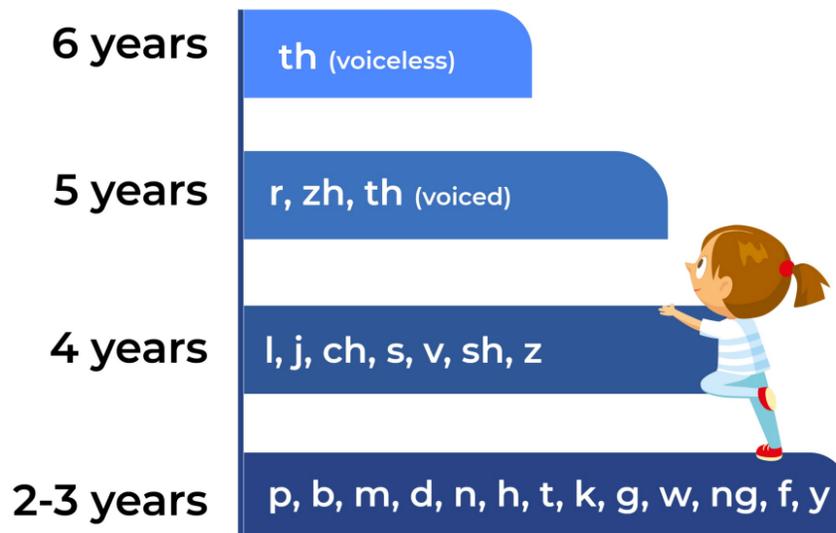
Your 5 year old...

- Uses sentences that can be more than 5 to 6 words long.
- Asks more difficult questions, like *why* and *how*.
- Understands most questions and adult conversation.
- Uses the present, future, and past tenses, like *walks, walked, and will walk*.
- Retells a story by naming the characters and by talking about what happened.



Source: **Talk box: a parent's guide to creating language rich environments**

Speech Sound Production Age Norms



Average age children learn to pronounce English consonants correctly
(Based on 15 English speech acquisition studies compiled by McLeod and Crowe, 2018)