
B: Communication Disorders Speech Sound Disorders

What do we mean by speech?

Speech refers to the movement of our mouth, throat, and lung muscles to produce spoken words. We use our language skills to understand and decide on the words we want to say, but we need our speech skills to move our muscles in the necessary way to say words.

What is a Speech Sound Disorder?

A speech sound disorder is a persistent difficulty saying words or sounds clearly. Most children can say almost all speech sounds correctly by 4 years old. A child with a Speech Sound Disorder continues to have difficulty with speech sounds beyond what would be expected for their age.

Symptoms of SSD:

- Saying one sound for another in a word
- Leaving sounds out of a word
- Adding sounds to a word
- Changing the sound in some way
- The child's speech may be difficult to understand

Other terms for SSD:

Speech Sound Disorders may also be described as “articulation disorder” or “phonological disorder”. Articulation refers to forming speech sounds. Phonology refers to the way sounds are organized in a language (e.g., sounds that are made by closing the airway and releasing the sound as in the phoneme, /p/).

Strategies for helping someone with a Speech Sound Disorder:

- Focus on what your child is saying not on the speech sound errors.
- If you don't understand all of what your child is saying, repeat back what you do understand. Say, 'You're telling me about '
- Repeat back words with correct speech sounds. Keep your speech natural, don't overemphasize changes you make.
- Try not to let your child become frustrated
 - Avoid having your child repeat words over and over
 - Help others understand your child by adding to the conversation in a natural way, 'That's right, Billy, you're telling Grandpa about ...'
- Seek the opinion of a speech-language pathologist early.
- Be sure that your child's hearing has been tested, and monitored if needed.

NOTE: OAFCCD recommends that you seek the advice of a Speech - Language Pathologist to get further information and advice that is specific to your child.