

## Issues in Texas Schools

Why/What do you need to know?

- Statewide over-identification of students receiving speech-language therapy
  - Specifically, bilingual and minority students
  - State Performance Plan indicators
    - Disproportionality in the special education program (SPP 9)
    - Disproportionality by specific disability (SPP 10)



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## **What is a Speech-Language Pathologist?**

### **❖ Levels of SLPs:**

- Speech-Language Pathologist – ASHA certified (SLP, MS/MA, CCC-SLP)
  - Can practice unsupervised in all setting types
- Speech-Language Pathologist- Intern – (SLP, MS/MA, SLP-CFY)
  - Can practice supervised in all settings
- Speech-Language Pathologist – TEA certified (SLP, BS/BA)
  - Can practice unsupervised only in schools
- Speech-Language Pathologist-Assistant (SLP-A, BS/BA)
  - Can practice supervised in limited settings

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3

## **Roles & Responsibilities of SLPs**

- Collaborate with RTI teams
- Evaluation of presence/absence of communication disorders
- Intervention/therapy
- Case management
- Supervision (of SLP-A's)

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4

## What are Communication Disorders?

- **Articulation** – how sounds are made
- **Voice** – pitch, loudness, quality
- **Fluency/stuttering** – smooth rhythm of speech
  
- **Language** – how we communicate with others and understand what others are saying (word usage, sentence structure, social interaction, comprehension, alternate communication methods)
  
- **Swallowing/Dysphasia** – oral-motor skills related to eating in order to maintain health

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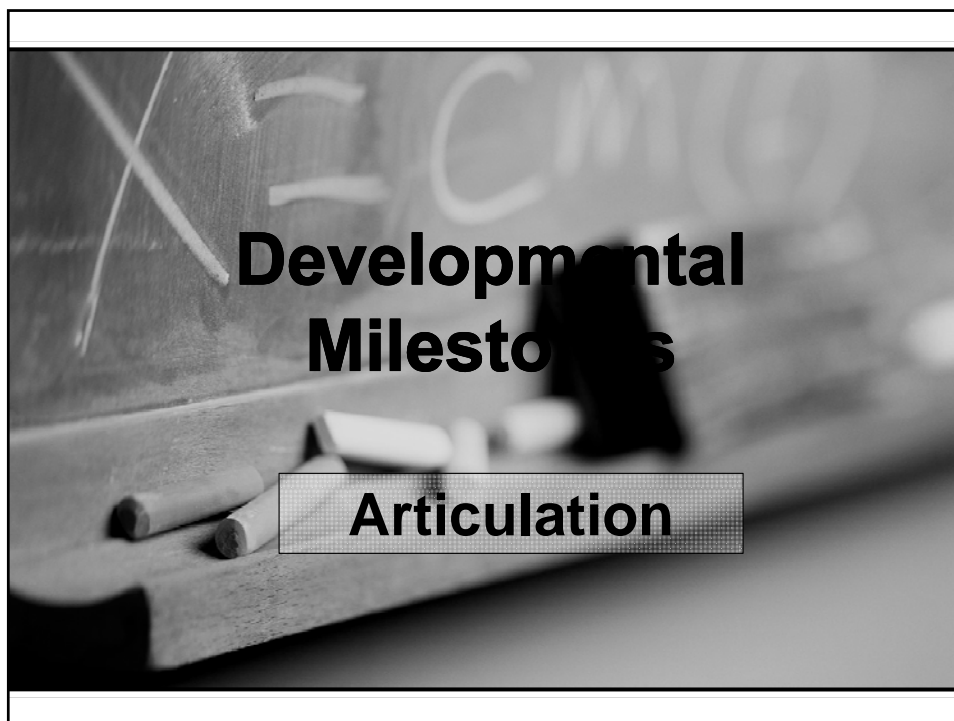
5

## Considerations....

- A student may exhibit problems in one or more of the previous listed areas
  
- Every student is unique and will reach milestones in different ways and times. The language spoken at home and cultural norms can influence the way that students communicate.

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## Phoneme Development

Children may acquire phonemes at different rates.  
By the age of 8, the typically developing child should be able to produce all phonemes.



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## Guidelines for Sound Errors by Grade to Refer for Testing

Pre-K or Head Start	Final Consonant Deletion (ca for cat) Initial Consonant Deletion (at for cat) /m,n,p,b,t,d/
Kindergarten	Any of the above plus weak syllable deletion (elphant for elephant) /f,v,k,g/
First	Any of the above plus /l/
Second	Any of the above plus /s,sh,ch,th/
Third (and up)	Any sound error including /r/

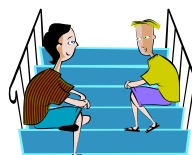
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9



# Language

Language use should be similar as compared to same-age peers; if it is significantly different or delayed, there may be cause for concern...



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# Language

Area of language	Definition & Examples
Syntax & Morphology	Sentence structure: e.g., omits auxiliary verbs, sentence fragments, shortened length of sentence Grammar: e.g., using appropriate word endings such as "ing", "ed", or "s" to change the meaning of words, using correct verb tense forms (have, had, has) and correct pronoun forms
Semantics	Word meanings: e.g., limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding non-literal language
Pragmatics	Social language: e.g., conversation skills (turn-taking, staying on topic, body language), understanding other's point of view

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12

# Language

- If you have concerns about what is appropriate for specific grade/age levels, please consult your Speech-Language Pathologist



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13

## 3 Questions to consider for Eligibility:

1. Is there a communication disorder?
2. Does the communication disorder have an adverse effect on educational performance?
3. Is there a need for specialized services of an SLP?

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14

## 1. Is there a communication disorder?

***~Difference does not equal Disorder~***

In order to determine a communication disorder, present speech/language differences or delays CANNOT be the result of :

**–cultural differences**

- Social customs (such as making eye-contact, speaking out loud to adults, etc.)

**–linguistic differences**

- Languages have differences in dialect, word order, tense usage
- Sound/phoneme variations influenced by the primary language

**–lack of instruction or opportunities**

- Influenced by limited economic status & opportunities, limited family interactions

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## 2. Does the communication disorder have an adverse effect on educational performance?

***~Disorder does NOT equal Eligibility~***

- Determined on a case-by-case basis of student's unique needs
  - Adverse effect on academic achievement resulting from an influence of the communication disorder,
- OR
- Adverse effect on functional performance in which the communication disorder limits participation in interpersonal activities

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### 3. Is there a need for specialized services of an SLP?

**~ *Speech Therapy is a Special Education Service* ~**

- Can the communication disorder that adversely effects academic performance be addressed by the Rtl Team, teacher, other SPED staff, or parent?
- If no, does the student require specialized services which can only be provided by a licensed SLP?
- What amount/type of support/services are needed to address academic/functional performance in the least restrictive environment?

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17

## **Speech Therapy Service Options:**

- **Direct** – face-to-face intervention inside the classroom or in a different location
- **Indirect** – not face-to-face with the student, but might include:
  - **Consultation with parent, teacher or student for determining carryover**
  - **Observation for determining carryover**
  - **Material preparation**
  - **Training staff/parents in order to support communication goals**
- **A combination of models may be used to serve some students**
- **Services should be individualized for each student based on educational need**

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## **Dismissal Options & Considerations:**

- Change in service models for individual students
  - Variation of service models
  - Change/variation in service frequencies
- Evaluate the educational need for continued service in relation to an adverse effect on academics and functional performance.

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19

## **Where do I go from here?**

**Meeting student needs  
without over-identifying for  
special education services**

## Considerations for Intervention

- **Begin with Student Support Team (SST) or other school-based intervention team**
  - Discuss and implement strategies to address student's needs (SLPs can participate as a team member, if needed).
  - Short-term RtI interventions addressing communication might be implemented to focus on articulation and/or language
  - Document:
    - what strategies are implemented,
    - how long strategies are implemented
    - the results of intervention
  - SST will determine whether:
    - intervention was successful
    - additional intervention is recommended
    - referral for evaluation is necessary

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## Working together we can...

- **Ensure a process for effective student intervention**
- **Recognize that all school staff members have a role in contributing to student success**
- **Address the statewide issue of over-identification**



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22

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