

Speech Impairment

What is a speech impairment?

A speech impairment refers to any type of disorder that involves the quality of speech that adversely affects educational performance. Speech impairments can be categorized by one or more categories pertaining to speech quality: Sound system disorder, speech voice and/or speech fluency.

A sound system disorder is present when a child exhibits a delay in sound production including articulation and/or phonology. In other words, a child is unable to make the sounds that are age appropriate to his or her peers.

Speech fluency disorders refer to impairments that affect the flow or rhythm of typical speech, such as stuttering. Examples of dysfluency can include repetitions, prolongations, blockages or hesitations.

Voice disorders are exhibited through deviations in one or more of the parameters of voice – pitch, quality or volume. Children with a voice disorder may have heightened nasality to their speech or have difficulty regulating the volume of their speech.

Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education – Criteria for Eligibility in the Educational Category of Speech Impairment

A sound system disorder, which includes articulation and/or phonology, is present when:

1. The student's sound production is one year behind the age identified in the State designated normative data.
2. The child's sound system is evaluated based on a single word test and/or a sentence/phrase repetition task and a connected speech sample
3. Consideration must be given to the type of error recorded (substitutions, omissions, distortions and/or additions). These errors may be described as single sound errors or errors in phonological patterns
4. A sound system disorder may also be present if multiple errors in the child's speech compromise intelligibility and/or listener perception even though the recorded errors are considered within normal developmental guidelines
5. The Sound System Disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance
6. There is documentation of the student's lack of response to evidence-based interventions designed to support communication development in the general education curriculum
7. The sound system disorder is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence

The evaluation report must include sufficient data to document the existence of the sound system disorder and if, during the collection and analysis of the data, the child's language abilities appear to be impaired, a language evaluation will need to be completed prior to a designation of language disorder.

A fluency disorder is present when:

A. The child consistently exhibits one or more of the following symptomatic behaviors of dysfluency:

1. Sound, syllabic or word repetition
2. Prolongations of sounds, syllables or words

3. Blockages
4. Hesitations

B. The child's fluency is significantly below the norm as measured by speech sampling in a variety of contexts and impairs communication in the child's educational environment.

C. The fluency disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance

D. There is documentation of the student's lack of response to evidence-based interventions designed to support communication development in the general education curriculum

A voice disorder is present when:

1. The child consistently exhibits deviations in one or more of the parameters of voice: Pitch, quality or volume
2. The child's voice is discrepant from the norm as related to his/her age, sex and culture and is distracting to the listener
3. The voice disorder is not the result of a temporary problem such as: normal voice changes, allergies, colds or other such conditions
4. The voice disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance
5. There is documentation of the student's lack of response to evidence-based interventions designed to support communication development in the general education curriculum

Resources

State	National
Missouri Speech-Language-Hearing Association www.showmemsha.org	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) 1-800-638-8255 www.asha.org
Missouri Normative Data Chart for Age-Appropriate sounds https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/se-com-state-normative-data.pdf	Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America www.apraxia-kids.org
	Center for Parent Information and Resources www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/speechlanguage
	Stuttering Foundation of America www.stutteringhelp.org