Speech or Language Impairment Eligibility

Speech/language impairments are unique in that speech and language services are viewed as both special education and as a related service.

Each state may have more specific or expansive definitions/explanations for what they consider a qualifying speech or language impairment, but federally IDEA defines speech and language impairments as “a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child’s education performance.” Here we breakdown what each of these means in more detail:

1. Articulation impairment

* A disorder/impairment which reduces intelligibility and significantly interferes with communication and attracts adverse attention. Generally, in order to qualify under this disorder, a student’s articulation competency must be below what is expected for their chronological age *or* developmental level.

1. Abnormal voice

* Persistent and defective voice quality, pitch, or loudness

1. Fluency disorder

* A student can qualify under this disorder when their flow of verbal expression adversely affects communication between the student and a listener.

1. Language impairment

* A student is considered to have an expressive or receptive language disorder/impairment when they have difficulty comprehending words, expressing themself, and listening to others