SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AS A RESOURCE

As a parent, you are the person who is most aware of your child's growth and development. If you have a sense that your child is struggling to develop fundamental **spoken language** (***listening skills, comprehension, speaking***) or the abilities related to **literacy** – ***reading*** and ***writing*** – then trust your gut feelings and instincts.

If your child is in any type of school setting – whether it is a preschool, primary, middle, or secondary – speak to teaching staff to learn how your child is progressing and to convey your concerns.

It is tricky to know who can help; there are a lot of professionals in a school setting who have a lot of specialties. *I think that the best first step is to discuss your concerns with a staff member with whom you may have developed a relationship and a level of comfort and trust.* You may have only spoken about general topics, but maybe you feel like that person shares your values. This staff member can know your child in any capacity – maybe as a classroom teacher, a speech-language pathologist, an occupational therapist, or a paraprofessional.

A person you can trust – with insights into your child – is an invaluable ally to have. This person can provide you feedback and help you form the early plan you may need to help your child. If a staff member recognizes that you are concerned and invested in your child's school experience and success, s/he usually will try to help you with your next steps.

If the staff member happens to be a ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST***, s/he can help you in a variety of important ways. ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS*** often work closely with the classroom teacher and other key personnel such as an occupational therapist or special education specialist. His/her experience can give you insights into your child's strengths and weaknesses and also advocate to other staff members.

Most importantly, more and more ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS*** have a wealth of knowledge about not only spoken language, but also literacy and the effect of language and literacy difficulties in the classroom.

The *American Speech-language and Hearing Association (ASHA)* is the governing body of ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS***. Over the last several years, *ASHA* has emphasized the knowledge that Speech-Language Pathologists possess in both **spoken language** and **written language** (i.e. ***reading, writing, and reading comprehension***) development.

In my opinion, many ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS*** are taking on this role with enthusiasm and expertise. I can point to several young clients whose parents relied on the expertise of the ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST*** to offer advice and be a catalyst to identify and serve language and literacy needs. For these clients of mine, the school-based Speech-Language Pathologist identified areas of concerns and advocated for the appropriate supports to be put into place.

I think that the areas of expertise of a ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST*** are more wide-ranging than has sometimes been thought. It is true that not every ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST*** is going to have the expertise to be a support or ally for you, and dynamics within a school can sometimes be tricky to manage. Still, you may want to make contact with the ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST*** at your child's school.

I also find *ASHA's* website to provide a great deal of user-friendly and relevant information related to *Language-Based Learning Disabilities*, along with the other language- and speech-based areas of focus within ***SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS'*** umbrella.

Feel free to click on the following links in the *ASHA* website. There is a great deal of helpful, sensible, and well-explained information that may answer questions you have and help you to take the next step forward.
https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/childsandl/
https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/learning-disabilities/

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE THE BEST ADVOCATE YOUR CHILD CAN HAVE AND THAT YOU ARE HELPING YOUR CHILD TO BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL LEARNER HE OR SHE CAN BE!!

If you have any questions, please contact us at Linguistic Foundations. We will be happy to give you more information or clarify any questions you have.

Thank you!