



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.

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/LBLD/>

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/ChildSandL.htm>

**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!