

Can a Speech and Language Pathologist help with Reading?

YES! A speech and language pathologist has valuable knowledge of language and its subsystems that are highly relevant for the prevention, identification, assessment and intervention of reading difficulties. Their knowledge allows them to design literacy programs that address difficulties involving phonological awareness (decoding), as well as memory and retrieval (comprehension).

How can speech therapy help?

- The goal of speech therapy is to target the specific aspects of reading and writing that are missing or difficult for the student.
- The student is taught strategies and how to apply them to his/her reading and writing tasks.

Some examples of areas that can be addressed during speech therapy are:

- Expressing ideas clearly
 - Word choice: using specific words (rather than “stuff” or “those”) and appropriate word choice for the intended meaning.
 - Sentence structure/Syntax: making sure all the words are in the correct order and that there are no extra words.
 - Grammar: using appropriate grammatical markers such as past tense, pronouns and plurals.
 - Meaning/Semantics: ensuring the sentence is relaying the intended message.
- Learning new vocabulary
 - Learning how to identify words in a reading passage
 - Learning strategies to determine the meaning of a word in a sentence
 - Learning strategies to remember the meaning when they come across the word in the future (i.e. using a word bank)
- Understanding written directions
 - Accurately reading the directions
 - Understanding the vocabulary in the directions
 - Breaking down the directions into manageable parts
- Understanding and retaining details of a story
 - Understanding the difference between the main idea and the details
 - Determining what details are important, understanding vocabulary
 - Understanding sentence meanings
 - Learning strategies to help retain important information (i.e. using a graphic organizer)

- Comprehending written material
 - Understanding vocabulary
 - Understanding sentence meanings
 - Learning how to break down written material into manageable pieces
 - Making connections
 - Understanding the intent of the material
 - Being able to summarize the material
- Phonological awareness
 - Decoding words (sounding out the word)
 - Rhyming
 - Learning about syllables
 - Learning how to blend letter sounds to form words
 - Learning how to manipulate words and letters
- Spelling
 - Learning how to associate letters and sounds
 - Learning strategies to remember the spelling of sight words
 - Especially those that are not spelt the way they sound
- Memory skills
 - Remembering and retaining sight words
 - Remembering and retaining vocabulary words
 - Remembering and retaining sentence meanings
 - Remembering and retaining the main idea of a story
 - Remembering and retaining the details of a story
 - Remembering and retaining strategies to help with reading and writing tasks
- Executive functioning
 - Strategies to help plan and organize reading and writing tasks
 - How to break down large tasks
 - What things need to be accomplished in the reading or writing task
 - Overall organizational skills

Please note: The above outline is not meant to be a comprehensive list for the items listed. These are just some examples of ways a speech and language pathologist can provide assistance to someone experiencing difficulty with reading.

Compiled from: www.independentspeech.com