

Speech Language Pathologist Frequently Asked Questions

What types of students receive speech and language services?

USD 475 provides speech-language services to a diverse population of students. SLPs work collaboratively with staff members and parents to support and determine the needs of English Language Learners, minimally verbal students to find alternative means of communication, swallowing and feeding needs in the schools, learning disabilities, phonological and articulation disorders, intellectual disabilities, students with autism and developmental delays, students with motor deficits, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, voice and fluency (stuttering) disorders, and receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language delays.

How are children evaluated for speech and language disorders?

Children who are referred for a speech and/or language evaluation are assessed by qualified personnel through a variety of formal and informal measures. Evaluations are individualized based upon the reported concerns and the reason for the referral. These measures include gathering background information, input from parents and educators, standardized and formal assessments, informal observations and assessments, probes for stimulability, and identification of potential effective intervention strategies.

How does a student qualify for speech and language services in the school?

Speech sound production skills are constantly developing in young children, and this process is different in every child. The Kansas Department of Education defines a "Speech or language impairment" as a communication disorder, including stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Many factors are considered in determining speech therapy services in the public school setting. These are individual to each child and include social impact, academic impact, type of errors, stimulability, and intelligibility. Additionally, speech language services can be provided as a related service, in which the service is necessary to support the instructional services of the student's special education programming.

How are speech therapy services provided in the schools?

IEP teams make the decision for the most appropriate way to meet a student's communication needs in the school setting. One service delivery model utilized by USD 475 is the flexible service delivery model. The flexible service delivery model, also known as a cyclical or 3:1 model, provides students with three weeks of direct service and one week of indirect services. The flexible service delivery model is promoted by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). Research indicates that this model provides more consistent services to students and increases collaboration time with teachers and parents. Several other districts in the country and in Kansas are implementing this model. It is an individualized, IEP team decision as to whether a student will receive this service delivery model or another service delivery model; these decisions are based upon a multitude of factors, most importantly student need. Many students in USD 475 receive direct speech therapy services every week of the school year. The primary objective of this model is to work with the goal of aligning speech therapy goals and objectives with the curriculum for better generalization of skills into the educational setting in which the student currently resides.