

Speech & Language 101

Receptive Language This is the ability to understand language! We can determine how well a child is understanding language by how well they can follow directions, answer questions, etc.

Expressive Language

This is the ability to express yourself! We tend to think of expressive language as the "words" we use, but it can also include nonverbal means of communication!

Nonverbal Communication This can include gestures (like pointing and waving), body language (like turning away from someone to end a conversation), physical communication (like pushing away an unwanted toy), and facial expressions.

Articulation How you say the sounds within words. A child with an articulation delay/disorder has difficulty producing one or some sounds.

Phonology An internal classification of sounds. When a child has a phonological problem, they have difficulty with entire classes of sounds (e.g., sounds made in the back of the mouth, sounds with a prolonged airflow). These errors fall into **patterns** called "**phonological processes.**" A child with a phonological disorder is generally more difficult to understand than a child with an articulation disorder.

Fluency The rhythm and flow of speech. A disruption in that flow (dysfluency) is commonly known as stuttering.

Semantics Refers to the meaning of a message.

Syntax The set of rules we use to put words into sentences.

Morphemes Words (and parts of words) that carry meaning. For example, "kick" is something that you do to a ball (1 morpheme), "kicked" indicates (1) what you did and (2) when you did it (2 morphemes).

Pragmatics

The social aspects of language. This deals with those "hidden rules" that we follow during interactions with others - you respond when someone greets you, you don't interrupt others, you don't stare. This is an area of language that is particularly difficult for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other disabilities.