



## What Special Education Programs Are Available?

### Speech and Language Support

Speech and Language Support is an IU-08 service that is provided at the Elementary, Middle and High School levels, depending on the needs of the students. Services are provided for all levels of students, including those in basic education, learning support, gifted support, emotional support, hearing impaired, autism spectrum disorder and life skills support. Each program is individualized, depending on the communication needs of the student.

The area of Speech and Language Support encompasses many facets of communication. These areas include:

- Articulation—speech sound production/oral motor skills
- Expressive language—sentence structure/formation, ability to communicate effectively
- Receptive language—concepts, vocabulary, auditory skills, literacy
- Pragmatic language—everyday usage of language/social language skills
- Fluency—‘choppy’ patterns of speaking/stuttering
- Voice—therapy provided per doctor recommendation
- Assistive Technology—use of low-tech switches/devices, portable writing devices to high-tech verbal output devices for students with significant verbal and/or written communication deficits

Speech and Language Support is under the guidelines of special education in the state of Pennsylvania. Therefore, the process and paperwork timelines are followed diligently.

It is the one support service that screens, assesses, identifies, treats and exits student who qualify for services.

Screening process: Each student that enters kindergarten is screened for speech. New students are also screened, with follow-up screenings occurring as designated by the speech therapist. Classroom teacher referrals, parent referrals, students incoming with current paperwork and the Instructional Support Team (IST) process elicit screening procedures and recommendations.

Assessment/Placement decisions: Depending on the outcome of the screening process, service delivery options are considered. These include: multi-disciplinary evaluation and full Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans or Instructional Support Team (IST) services, which are more of a short-term delivery of services. Usually IST referrals are for students with no academic problems, single sound errors or mild fluency issues.

Treatment of speech and language needs: IEP/IST goals/objectives are developed/written with parent and teacher inputs. Services are provided either in the classroom environment such as during reading class (push-in) or through pull-out in the speech room. This type of service is dependent on the needs of the student and the recommendations of the IEP/IST team. Continued consultation with classroom teachers and parents is a vital factor in success of the program. In the therapy setting, activities are connected with the curriculum as well as Pennsylvania Academic Standards. During treatment, the main premise of the program is the build on the student's strengths to support their needs. We never settle for less than our best and try our best in all endeavors. A positive learning environment is fostered for each student, with use of tangible rewards, verbal praise and a fun environment for optimum learning. For those with IEPs and more involved programs, students are in the program for only as long as they need it. Once they have met their goals and objectives, services are rendered complete.