

SEVERITY RATING SCALES: INDICATORS FOR SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of these severity rating scales is to provide a tool to assist teachers in identifying the degree of impact a particular challenge has on a student. These severity rating scales are not exhaustive, and only cover some of the most common areas of concern.

This document includes severity rating scales for the following broad categories:

- Language
- Articulation
- Voice
- Fluency

How to Use This Document

- There is a separate severity rating scale for each category mentioned above.
- These scales
 - can be used to determine the level of impact a student is experiencing in a particular area;
 - are meant as a starting point when concerns are noted and services are being considered;
 - can be used to discuss appropriate service options;
 - are designed so that each one can be used on its own, while recognizing that students may be impacted in more than one area.
- If moderate to severe concerns are identified on any of the scales, the concerns may be taken forward for discussion with additional school or jurisdiction personnel as per the school authority protocol.

Note: These scales are not meant to be used as a classroom screening tool.

References

ASHA Guidelines for the Roles and Responsibilities of the School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist
Alberta Health Unit Speech-Language Pathology Standards, October 1993
Tennessee Department of Education "Resource Packet Speech and Language Impairments Severity Rating Scales, 04/09"
Maine Department of Education "Severity Rating Scales/Guidelines for Speech/Language Communication Services, 08/10"

LANGUAGE SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Language Impairment: Any disorder of language that interferes with communication and has a negative effect on student’s performance and/or functioning in a typical learning environment. A language impairment may include a disorder in one or more learning processes involved in receptive (understanding) and expressive (use) language.

NOTE: A formal assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if a formal assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

NOTE: Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

NOTE: Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a jurisdiction level coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
Description of Language	The student's language skills are within the expected language performance range for their age	<p>*student demonstrates effective performance most of the time with minimal or no assistance.</p> <p>*The student's language skills are deficient in at least one of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence length/complexity • Word order/syntax • Vocabulary/semantics • Word finding • Word form/morphology • Phonology • Social skills/pragmatics • Auditory perception (memory, attention, discrimination, sequencing) 	<p>*Student requires more prompts/cues, explanations, progress checks than the typical student in class</p> <p>*The student's language skills are deficient in at least two of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence length/complexity • Word order/syntax • Vocabulary/semantics • Word finding • Word form/morphology • Phonology • Social skills/pragmatics • Auditory perception (memory, attention, discrimination, sequencing) 	<p>*Despite the provision of modifications and supports, student does not demonstrate effective performance a majority of the time.</p> <p>*The student's language skills are deficient in at least three of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence length/complexity • Word order/syntax • Vocabulary/semantics • Word finding • Word form/morphology • Phonology • Social skills/pragmatics • Auditory perception (memory, attention, discrimination, sequencing)
Impact on Education	Acquisition of academic, social and/or functional skills is not affected.	<p>*Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills may be affected.</p> <p>*student's receptive or expressive language minimally interferes with</p>	<p>* Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills is often affected</p> <p>*student's receptive or expressive language frequently interferes with</p>	<p>* Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills is impaired.</p> <p>*student's receptive or expressive language significantly interferes with their primary mode of</p>

		their primary mode of communication (speech, sign language, device, etc.)	their primary mode of communication (speech, sign language, device, etc.)	communication (speech, sign language, device, etc.)
Identification of Needs		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>* Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>	<p>* Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
Addressing Needs		<p>* Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDC website</p> <p>SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>* Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDC website</p> <p>SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>	<p>* Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD/ARPDC website</p> <p>SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>

ARTICULATION SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Articulation Impairment: The abnormal production of speech sounds including: substitutions, omissions, distortions, or addition of speech sounds not commensurate with student's chronological age or cultural linguistic background and not related to dialect.

NOTE: A formal assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if a formal assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

NOTE: Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

NOTE: Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a jurisdiction level coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
Description of Articulation	*No sound errors present or production is developmentally appropriate.	*Speech can be understood by an unfamiliar listener although some errors are noticeable. *Errors consist of substitutions and/or distortions that are age appropriate. * No more than 2 speech sound errors outside developmental guidelines. *Student is able to imitate a speech sound model provided by a teacher or other. *Student produces speech sound errors in some words but not others.	*Speech is more difficult to understand to an unfamiliar listener and numerous errors are noticeable. *Errors consist of substitutions and/or distortions that are not age appropriate. * More than 2 speech sound errors outside developmental guidelines. *Student has difficulty imitating a speech sound model provided by a teacher or other. *Student produces speech sound errors in many words.	*Speech is not understood by most listeners and numerous errors are noticeable. *Errors consist of substitutions and/or distortions that are not age appropriate. * Numerous speech sound errors outside developmental guidelines. *Student is unable to imitate a speech sound model provided by a teacher or other. *Student produces speech sound errors in most words.
Impact on Communication	Does not interfere with communication.	* Minimally interferes with communication. *The student may experience some difficulty with expression and/or comprehension.	* Frequently interferes with communication. *The student experiences difficulty with expression and/or comprehension.	* Significantly interferes with and/or prevents communication. *The student has limited functional expression and/or comprehension.

		*The student's spoken message is understood by others most of the time.	*The student's spoken message is understood by others some of the time.	*The student's spoken message is rarely understood by others.
Impact on Education	Acquisition of academic, social and/or functional skills is not affected.	*Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills may be affected.	*Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills is usually affected	*Acquisition of academic, social, and/or functional skills is impaired .
Identification of Needs		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation, consultation with developmental guide and/or screening.</p> <p>Articulation Developmental Guide</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening.</p> <p>Articulation Developmental Guide</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or "Learning Support Facilitator" may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation and screening.</p> <p>Articulation Developmental Guide</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or "Learning Support Facilitator" may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
Addressing Needs		<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD website SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD website SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available resources including universal resources on CA RCSD website SLP Universal Strategies</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with "Learning Support Facilitator" and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>

VOICE SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Voice Disorder: A condition characterized by abnormal loudness, pitch and/or quality of voice that are inappropriate for an individual’s gender, age, cultural background or geographic location. Voice disorders may be organic (resulting from neurological or structural changes of the respiratory or vocal mechanisms) or functional (resulting from inefficient or improper use of the vocal mechanism) in nature.

NOTE: A Speech-Language Pathologist plays a central role in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of voice disorders. SLPs will typically consider whether a referral to medical specialists (i.e. Ear Nose Throat Specialists) would be appropriate.

NOTE: A formal assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if a formal assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

NOTE: Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged

NOTE: Most school authorities have school-based and/or jurisdiction based staff whose role is to support learning needs. These roles have varying titles across school jurisdictions (LST, SSF, LAT, LIFT, IEF, IC, SSC, Learning Coach, Central Coordinator). For the purpose of this document, this role is referred to as “Learning Support Facilitator” whether the role is being filled by a teacher, an administrator or a jurisdiction level coordinator.

	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
Description of Voice	*Pitch, quality, volume, rate, and resonance are not unusual.	*Noticeable and inconsistent functioning in one or more of these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising and lowering of pitch for age and gender • increase or decrease in the intensity/volume of speech • breathiness, harshness, hoarseness, tenseness or other abnormal quality • nasal quality of speech 	* Noticeable and persistent functioning in one or more of these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising and lowering of pitch for age and gender • increase or decrease in the intensity/volume of speech • breathiness, harshness, hoarseness, tenseness or other abnormal quality • excessive nasal quality of speech 	* Noticeable, consistent, extreme and inappropriate functioning in one or more of these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising and lowering of pitch for age and gender • increase or decrease in the intensity/volume of speech or the loss of the ability to speak • breathiness, harshness, hoarseness, tenseness or other abnormal quality • excessive nasal quality of speech
Impact on Communication		*The voice difference is <i>not severe enough</i> to interfere with communication.	*The voice difference <i>may</i> interfere with communication and/or impair intelligibility.	*The voice difference <i>impairs</i> communication and/or intelligibility.

<p>Impact on Education</p>		<p>*Voice rarely distracts listeners from message.</p> <p>*Minimal impact on social, emotional, and/or academic functioning.</p>	<p>*Voice does distract listener from message.</p> <p>*Frequently Interferes with social, emotional, and/or academic functioning.</p>	<p>*Voice does distract listener from message.</p> <p>*Avoidance of speaking situations may be observed.</p> <p>*Significantly limits social, emotional, and/or academic functioning due to limited ability to communicate appropriately.</p>
<p>Identification of Needs</p>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel..</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
<p>Addressing Needs</p>		<p>*Teacher may access available universal resources.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available universal resources.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>	<p>*Teacher may access available universal resources.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>*Consultative, targeted or individual supports from an SLP may be available depending upon school jurisdiction process.</p>

FLUENCY SEVERITY RATING SCALE

DEFINITION: Fluency Disorder (stuttering): An interruption in the flow of speaking characterized by atypical rate, rhythm, and repetitions in sounds, syllables, words, and phrases.

NOTE: A formal assessment is NOT required to determine severity. However, if a formal assessment has already been completed within the last 6 months, that data would be used to help determine severity and service options.

NOTE: Teacher must review student record when concerns are identified for information about previous assessments, supports, and/or strategies which may still be applicable. If possible, consultation with previous teacher is encouraged.

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	<u>No Apparent Problem</u>	<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
Description of Fluency	*Fluency of speech does not draw attention to the student.	*3 to 5% stuttered words of total words spoken with a speech sample of at least 100 words. *Smooth speech predominates.	*6-10% stuttered words of total words spoken with a speech sample of at least 100 words. * This may be accompanied by secondary characteristics (i.e. facial grimaces, eye blinks, abnormal changes in pitch/loudness, tapping feet, hand slapping).	*11% or more stuttered words of total words spoken with a speech sample of at least 100 words. * This is often accompanied by secondary characteristics (i.e. facial grimaces, eye blinks, abnormal changes in pitch/loudness, tapping feet, hand slapping). * Frustration and avoidance behaviors (i.e. reduced verbal output or avoiding words/situations where disfluency is most common) often present.
Impact on Communication		*The student rarely expresses awareness of disfluencies.	*The student may express awareness of disfluencies.	*The student usually expresses awareness of disfluencies. *Avoidance of speaking situations is observed. *Student may be ridiculed, ignored, or excluded from play or group activities as a result of disfluencies.

<p>Impact on Education</p>		<p>*Minimal listener reaction.</p> <p>*Disfluencies <i>minimally</i> interfere with educational functioning.</p>	<p>*Some listener reaction</p> <p>*Disfluencies <i>frequently</i> interfere with educational functioning.</p>	<p>*Significant listener reaction</p> <p>* Disfluencies <i>significantly</i> interfere with educational functioning.</p> <p>*Student may do poorly on reports, oral assignments, and reading.</p> <p>*Student may withdraw from group learning activities.</p>
<p>Identification of Needs</p>		<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and/or other school personnel.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>	<p>*Concerns identified by teacher observation.</p> <p>* Teacher to confirm that concern is shared by parent/guardian.</p> <p>* Teacher may consult with “Learning Support Facilitator” and other school personnel.</p> <p>* Classroom teacher and/or “Learning Support Facilitator” may discuss identification of needs with SLP (if available) according to school authority process.</p>
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