

# **How to Support Children with Speech and Language Impairment**

Education Bureau 2015

## **Introduction**

Parents always wish to provide their children with the best living and learning environment in order to nurture them to achieve success in future. With early identification and support, children with special educational needs (SEN) may adapt to everyday life and the learning environment, and develop their potentials.

## **What is Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)?**

Language is the building block of knowledge and an important tool for thinking and communication. School-aged children with SLI cannot communicate with others effectively. Their academic performance, emotions and social development will also be affected. The common types of SLI amongst school-aged children are subdivided into four major categories:

### **Articulation Problem**

Articulation problem refers to mispronunciation of words due to various causes to the extent that other people cannot understand what is being said, such as mispronouncing “say” as “day”.

### **Language Problem**

Children may fail to understand fully the information conveyed in a message, which leads to misunderstanding or even communication breakdown. Children with weak organization skills or limited vocabulary would have difficulties in conveying their messages.

### **Fluency Problem**

Fluency problem, also known as stammering, refers to the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by repetition of syllables or words, or prolongation of sounds, or the speech rate is too fast or too slow, or blocks.

### **Voice Problem**

Voice problem refers to hoarseness, loss of voice, excessively high/low pitch, difficulties in controlling the loudness of voice, hyper- or hypo-nasality, etc. due to various causes.

## **Roles of Parents**

### **I Suspect that My Child may have SLI...**

- Initiate contact with his/her teachers or the student guidance personnel of the school.

Schools can then give appropriate assessment and guidance services.

### **My Child is Assessed to have SLI...**

- Provide the school with the SEN information of your child promptly and proactively;
- Maintain communication with the school's student support team, class teacher and subject teachers to understand your child's learning and communication in school; and discuss appropriate support strategies with them when necessary;
- Be supportive, and avoid mimicking or teasing;
- Converse with your child more often, demonstrate the use of a wide range of vocabulary and sentences, use open-ended or guiding questions to help him/her organize his/her thoughts and content of his/her speech so as to enrich his/her expressive language;
- To correct articulation errors, help your child master the skills required to produce the target sound with more practices at home, encourage and praise his/her attempts, and remind him/her of the areas needing improvement so as to increase his/her self-confidence and sense of success;
- Build up your stammering child's confidence in speaking, listen patiently, and remind your child to pause at appropriate places; and
- On voice problem, if your child has a hoarse voice, remind him/her to reduce vocal abusive behaviour such as yelling, crying, excessive throat clearing, overusing his/her voice, etc. and have adequate voice rest instead. Remind your child to maintain adequate and regular fluid intake, eat more fruits and vegetables while avoiding deep-fried food and spicy food, and exercise regularly while avoiding stress to prevent deterioration of the problem.

For further information on supporting children with SEN, parents may refer to the "Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" on the Education Bureau (EDB) website (please see the back page for the website).

### **Support Services and Strategies**

In general, schools will provide the following support in accordance with the needs of the students:

- Utilize additional resources such as "Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant" or "Learning Support Grant" to arrange school-based speech therapy services, under which the speech therapists, in collaboration with teachers and parents, will provide school-based services in the scope of prevention, remediation and enhancement so that students with SLI can receive comprehensive and appropriate support in a timely manner, and the overall language abilities of students could be enhanced. The services include:
  - Establish a school-based mechanism on the identification and referral of students with suspected SLI;
  - Provide speech and language assessment and support services for students;
  - Provide consultation and training for teachers and parents; and

- Collaborate with subject teachers to develop teaching strategies for enhancing the “listening, speaking, reading and writing” skills of students.
- Integrate speech therapy elements into teaching and learning, allowing students to flexibly apply related language skills in lessons, so as to enhance their communication and learning abilities;
- Encourage teachers and parents to participate in therapy sessions so as to enhance the understanding of the needs of students and skills in supporting them; and
- Use the training materials, resource packages, guidelines, etc. that help the learning of students with SLI, so as to enhance the learning and communication effectiveness of the students.

## **Useful Websites and Telephone Numbers for Enquiry**

### **Education Bureau**

<http://www.edb.gov.hk>

Hong Kong Regional Education Office (Tel: 2863 4646)

Kowloon Regional Education Office (Tel: 3698 4108)

New Territories East Regional Education Office (Tel: 2639 4876)

New Territories West Regional Education Office (Tel: 2437 7272)

General Enquiries on Special Education (Tel: 3698 3957)

### **Speech and Hearing Services Section**

Speech Therapy Services (Tel: 3698 3790)

Audiological Services (Tel: 3698 3909)

### **Special Education Resource Centre (Tel: 3698 3900)**

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/special/resources/serc/index.html>

### **Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education**

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/special/resources/serc/download/ieparentguide.pdf>

### **Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education**

[http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/special/support/wsa/ie%20guide\\_en.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/special/support/wsa/ie%20guide_en.pdf)

### **Department of Health**

- Child Assessment Service (Tel: 2246 6659)

<http://www.dhcas.gov.hk/eindex.html>

- Student Health Service (Tel: 2349 4212)

<http://www.studenthealth.gov.hk/eindex.html>

### **Social Welfare Department**

<http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index>

### **The Hong Kong Council of Social Service**

<http://hkcss.org.hk/e>

### **OneClick**

<http://oneclick.hku.hk/en>