

What has “Speech Therapy” got to do with academics?

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Most people have heard of a speech therapist before and have some idea of what they do. A speech therapist’s job doesn’t only involve solving the issues people may have with certain words or stutters or lisps. In fact, it’s far FAR more than that! Their scope of practice also includes language, feeding, voice and literacy therapy! In a school setting, speech therapists play a key role in identifying and providing support to learners struggling with reading, writing, comprehension, and spelling. These components of literacy are essential to academic success in all school subjects.

Speech therapists in schools’ support:

Reading and Writing

- Pronouncing and discriminating sounds correctly (If a child spells a word the way they say it, “birthday” might be “birfday”).
- Building vocabulary and formulating sentences. “I saw a butterfly” becomes “I saw a colourful species of butterfly before dusk”.
- Building vocabulary and language organization to provide good definitions. The answer to “What is a butterfly?” goes from “Something that flies” to “It’s an insect with two pairs of large, colourful often symmetrical wings that flies”.
- Learning the rules of language. “He rided to the shops” becomes “He rode to the shops”.
- Learning the rules of spelling e.g. when to double consonants in words (putting, little, kitten).
- Learning more vocabulary and increasing their reading comprehension.
- Learning how to formulate logical and appropriate answers to comprehension questions.
- Learning how to find context clues and use inferencing skills.
- Understanding figurative language.

Mathematics and Numeracy

- Building skills to follow complex directions.
- Building skills to learn sequencing.
- Building skills to cope with complex word problems containing numeracy concepts.

Classroom Presentation and Social Skills

- Help students learn the rules of conversation.
- Help students learn to change speaking style to match listener and/or environment.
- Help children who stutter learn fluency tools and techniques.
- Help students learn to project their voices effectively for public speaking.