

What to Expect: Your Child's Speech-Language Evaluation

What to expect during your child's speech-language evaluation

For 45-60 minutes, the Speech-Language Pathologist, or SLP, will do the following:

- **Start by asking you about your child's communication concerns.**
 - Please be specific, as you know your child best! Share your observations, any useful reports from teachers, any family history of speech, language, or learning concerns, and any related medical issues (such as frequent ear infections, formal hearing evaluations, etc.).
- **Start by getting to know and building trust with your child.**
 - The SLP will start talking or playing with your child to help them feel more comfortable with the SLP during the evaluation.
- **Do formal assessments**, which are standardized and scored tests that help compare your child's current speech-language skills to what is expected for their age and stage of development. Types of these formal assessments may include the following:
 - **Articulation test:** This test is done if your child has a hard time pronouncing words. The SLP will show pictures for your child to name and describe. The SLP is listening to how your child produces speech sounds in words, in sentences, and during conversation.
 - The SLP might also do a physical examination of the movements of your child's face and mouth. The SLP may ask your child to move their lips or tongue or to imitate sounds (such as "aahh").

- **Expressive language test:** This test is done if your child has a hard time putting sentences together. The SLP will show pictures and ask your child to label, describe, comment, or answer questions about them.
 - The SLP is paying attention to the number of words your child has in their vocabulary, if they can answer simple and complex questions, and if they use grammar markers (such as pronouns, verb tenses, etc.) appropriately.
- **Receptive language test:** This test is done if your child has a hard time following directions or learning new concepts. The SLP will ask your child to identify objects or pictures based on instructions, and to follow directions that become longer and more complex.
- **Tests to measure fluent speech:** If your child has stuttering, the SLP will ask your child to describe pictures or a story, to read aloud (if age-appropriate), and to engage in conversation.
 - The SLP is listening to how often your child might repeat sounds and words, and how much these repetitions affect your child's ability to easily communicate with others.
- **Do informal observations and assessments.**
 - Informal assessments might include playing with your child, collecting a language sample by having your child describe pictures or a story, or watching as your child interacts with you.
 - While it may look like play or a simple conversation, the SLP is paying close attention to the quality of your child's voice, how your child says words, puts sentences together, follows directions, processes questions, and interacts socially.

What to expect after your child's speech-language evaluation

For 15-30 minutes, the SLP will do the following:

- **Talk with you about the test results.**

- The results of the speech-language evaluation will give information on how your child is communicating, which skills they are starting to show, which skills they have, and which skills need more support to develop.
- **Talk about recommendations.**
 - The SLP may recommend speech-language therapy for your child.
 - How often your child goes to therapy (every week, two times a week, etc.) will depend on your child's specific needs.
- **Talk about community resources.**
 - The SLP may recommend that you look at community resources (home-based early intervention services, school-based speech therapy services, etc.).
 - The SLP may talk with you about activities you can do at home and show you how to do them.
- **Give you a final report.**
 - This report will be mailed to your home or be shared with you through the Patient Portal (MyUofMHealth.org) after the evaluation.

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