

LEARNING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Speech & Language Impairments Teacher Guide

Purpose

Practical classroom strategies, accommodations, printable learning support ideas, and assessment options designed specifically for ASL teachers working with students who have speech and language impairments.

What are Speech & Language Impairments?

Speech and language impairments involve difficulty with expressive or receptive language, such as forming clear signs or sentences, understanding instructions, or using vocabulary and grammar accurately. Students with these impairments are capable learners who often thrive with slower pacing, repeated modeling, and language broken into small, clear steps.

Student Strengths

- Strong visual and gestural communicator
- Attentive observer
- Eager to connect with others
- Persistent when given time
- Good at reading context and body language
- Motivated by one-on-one interaction

Teaching Strategies

- Model signs slowly and clearly before expecting output
- Give extra wait time for a student to respond
- Use short, simple sentence structures
- Pair new vocabulary with visuals and real objects
- Rephrase instead of just repeating when not understood
- Offer sentence starters and modeled examples

Learning Support Activities

- Sentence-building cards with sign order visuals
- Modeled sign-and-copy practice
- Choice boards for expressive responses
- Structured question-and-answer sign drills
- Story retelling with picture sequence cards

Assessment Ideas

- Video responses to track expressive progress
- One-on-one assessments with extra wait time
- Accept approximated signs as evidence of understanding
- Observation checklists across settings

Things to Avoid

- Finishing sentences or signs for the student
- Rapid-fire questions without processing time
- Correcting every error instead of modeling correctly
- Assuming language delay means low comprehension

Remember

Every student is unique. Use these strategies together with each student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, school policies, and professional judgment. The goal is not to lower expectations, but to provide meaningful access to learning.