



ESE Program Information Sheet - Language Impaired (LI)

Definition: Language impairments are disorders of language that interfere with communication, adversely affect performance and/or functioning in the student's typical learning environment, and result in the need for exceptional student education. Language impairment is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. These include:

1. **Phonology** – Phonology is defined as the sound systems of a language and the linguistic conventions of a language that guide the sound selection and sound combinations used to convey meaning;
2. **Morphology** – Morphology is defined as the system that governs the internal structure of words and the construction of word forms;
3. **Syntax** – Syntax is defined as the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence;
4. **Semantics** – Semantics is defined as the system that governs the meanings of words and sentences; and
5. **Pragmatics** – Pragmatics is defined as the system that combines language components in functional and socially appropriate communication.

The language impairment may manifest in significant difficulties affecting listening comprehension, oral expression, social interaction, reading, writing, or spelling. A language impairment is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

This definition is found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.030121, F.A.C

Overview: Language impairment may exist when a child has delayed or disordered language development for no apparent reason. Usually the first indication of LI is that the child is later than usual in starting to speak and subsequently is delayed in putting words together to form sentences. Spoken language may be immature. In many children with LI, understanding of language, or receptive language, is also impaired, though this may not be obvious unless the child is given a formal assessment. Although difficulties with use and understanding of complex sentences are a common feature of LI, the diagnostic criteria encompass a wide range of problems, and for some children other aspects of language are problematic.

State Laws and Regulation: The rules referenced below are specific to LI. Please refer to [Volume I-B: Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules, Excerpts Related to Exceptional Student Education](#) (PDF, 9MB) for a complete listing of laws and regulations applicable to exceptional student education.

- [6A-6.030121, F.A.C.: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments](#)

- [6A-4.0176, F.A.C.: Specialization Requirements for Certification in the Area of Speech-Language Impaired \(Grades K-12\) - Academic Class](#)
- [6A-4.01761, F.A.C.: Specialization Requirements for Certification in the Area of Speech-Language Impaired/Associate - Academic Class](#)

General Resources: The following Resources will provide educators with information concerning Students who are Language Impaired.

- [Technical Assistance Paper DPS: 2010-179 Exceptional Student Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments](#) (PDF)
- [Technical Assistance Paper DPS: 2009-099 – Questions and Answers Regarding Speech/Language as a Related Service](#) (PDF)
- [Technical Assistance Paper K12: 2007-137 - Questions and Answers Regarding Speech-Language Impaired Associate Certification](#) (PDF)
- [Technical Assistance Paper FY 2006-1 - Roles of Speech-Language Pathologists in Regard to Reading](#) (PDF, 117KB)
- [Language-Reading Connection for Speech-Language Pathologists](#)
- [Language Impairment and Specific Learning Disabilities Interface](#) (PowerPoint Presentation, 2MB)
- [Language Impairment and Specific Learning Disabilities Interface](#) (RTF, 146KB)
- [Overview of the Revised Speech and Language Rules](#) (PowerPoint Presentation, 2MB)
 - [Overview of the Revised Speech and Language Rules](#) (RTF, 301KB)
- [Context for Change](#) (PowerPoint Presentation, 8MB)
- [Context for Change](#) (RTF, 159KB)

State Resources:

- [Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists \(FLASHA\)](#)
- [Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology](#)

National Resources:

- [American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#)

Tips to support inclusion: Although knowing the general characteristics of LI is helpful, teaching strategies for students with LI still need to be individualized. It is important for teachers to realize the wide range of abilities and characteristics students with LI may exhibit.

- Repeat grammatically incorrect responses with the correct response, using a natural tone of voice. For example, if the child says or writes, “I goed to the beach,” then you say, “Oh, you went to the beach?” Be sensitive to the student when correcting, to avoid the possibility of embarrassing the child.
- Before reading a book or introducing new concepts, review new vocabulary with students who are LI.
- Pair visuals with vocabulary, whenever possible.
- Use word walls to practice vocabulary.

- Use graphic organizers to help students who struggle with reading comprehension.
- Use visuals to help a child organize his thoughts, before the child is required to speak or write a response.
- Give clear instructions and avoid multi-step directions, whenever possible.
- Have small group discussions, so the student with a LI can discuss newly taught information without having to speak before the entire class.
- Ask basic questions that have the answer in a picture or hands-on activity to give the child a successful experience in answering.
- Provide adequate processing time before restating the question or providing the answer.
- Use several modalities when teaching.
- Have frequent comprehension checks.
- Provide additional support for writing down information and assignments in the student's homework notebook. Visuals could be used to show what needs to go home – for example, a picture of a math book or writing notebook or simply holding them up. Some students may need written directions on how to complete assignments.
- Expand on what the child says and speak in sentences that are one or two words longer than the child's typical utterances.
- Have a print rich environment.
- Talk, Talk, Talk!
- Listen, Listen, Listen!