

Hello Fellow TCS Parents,

I am Penny Verkleir. I am a private practice pediatric speech-language pathologist and mother of two wonderful TCS students.

I love our school and it is my desire to make myself available to any current TCS family who may have concerns regarding the speech and language skills of their children. I am offering to screen your child's speech and language skills at a very special rate of \$10 per screening. A screening takes 10-30 minutes to complete and can be done at your preferred location. Graciously, TCS has agreed to allow screenings to take place at the TCS campus, if this is your preference.

You can learn more about speech pathology and my services at www.BigDreamsSpeechTherapy.com or contact me at PennySLP@gmail.com or 903-227-0957.

Thank you and God bless,
Penny Verkleir, M.S., CCC-SLP

Families interested in having a student screened should fill out the following and return to your child's teacher or TCS office. Please include the special TCS screening fee rate of only \$10.00. Make checks payable to Penny Verkleir.

(please print)

Student's Name: _____

Male _____ Female _____

Student's Date of Birth: _____

Home Room Teacher: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Any Family or Teacher concerns regarding your child's communication? Yes/No

If yes, please explain: _____

I declare that I am the *(circle one)*: **Father** / **Mother** / **Legal Guardian** of the above mentioned child. I do hereby consent to Penny Verkleir, M.S., CCC-SLP to screen my child's speech/language skills.

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Once the above permission slip and fee is received, you will be contacted to schedule your child's screening.

What is a Speech-Language Pathologist?

by Susie Loraine, M.A., CCC-SLP

A *speech-language pathologist* (SLP) is a highly-trained professional who evaluates and treats children and adults who have difficulty with speech or language. Although people often think of speech and language as the same thing, the terms actually have very different meanings. If your child has trouble with *speech*, he/she struggles with the “how-to” of talking—the coordination of the muscles and movements necessary to produce speech. If your child has trouble with *language*, he/she struggles with understanding what he/she hears or sees. Your child may struggle to find the right words and/or organize those words in a meaningful way to communicate a message or hold a conversation.

A speech-language pathologist also evaluates and treats children and adults who have difficulty swallowing food or liquid. An SLP will help identify what part of the *swallowing process* is making it difficult for your child to eat (e.g., chewing, manipulating food with the tongue; coordinating mouth and throat structures and muscles; breathing appropriately while eating).

What do SLPs Treat?

Below is a list of common speech and language disorders with a brief explanation of each:

Speech Disorders

- *Articulation* - the way we say our speech sounds
- *Phonology* - the speech patterns we use
- *Apraxia* - difficulty planning and coordinating the movements needed to make speech sounds
- *Fluency* - stuttering
- *Voice* - problems with the way the voice sounds

Language Disorders

- *Receptive Language* - difficulty understanding language
- *Expressive Language* - difficulty using language
- *Pragmatic Language* - social communication; the way we speak to each other

Other Disorders

- *Deafness/Hearing Loss* - loss of hearing; therapy includes developing lip-reading, speech, and/or alternative communication systems
- *Oral-Motor Disorders* - weak tongue and/or lip muscles
- *Swallowing/Feeding Disorders* - difficulty chewing and/or swallowing

3 Years to 4 Years Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 3 to 4 year olds (preK 3) should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

A child who is 3 years old should be able to:

- * Produce an expressive vocabulary of 900-1,000 words
- * Produce sentences that have 4 or more words
- * Produce possessives (eg. "sister's lunch" "mommy's car" etc.)
- * Understands several forms of questions (why, who, whose, and how many)
- * Produces several forms of questions
- * Produces negatives "can't" and "don't"
- * Speech should be 75% (*or better*) understandable by strangers
- * Odd substitutions should be disappearing (such as "otay" instead of "okay" or "kop" instead of "top")
- * Usually talks easily without repeating syllables or words

A referral is indicated for a 3 year old student who:

- _____ does speak in sentences
- _____ whose talking seems "immature" compared to their peers
- _____ doesn't seem to understand what is being said
- _____ seems to be "in their own world"
- _____ has a breathy or hoarse voice
- _____ has trouble getting syllables or words out in spite of knowing what he/she wants to say
- _____ frustrated when attempting to communicate with others
- _____ makes odd sound substitutions (even though it might be cute to others/family)
- _____ is understood less than 75% of the time by listeners
- _____ can not answer basic wh- questions

- _____ talks only about the “here and now” rather than events in the past/present
- _____ can not listen to 2-3 lines of a story and answer simple questions about it
- _____ does not follow simple 2-step directions
- _____ puts words in the wrong order in sentences
- _____ leaves out little words (in, the, of) and word endings (-ing, -ed, -s) in their sentences

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4 Years to 5 Years

Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 4 to 5 year olds (PreK 4) should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

A child between the ages of 4 and 5 should be able to:

- _____ Produce an expressive vocabulary that is about 1,500 to 1,600 words
- _____ Pay attention to a short story and answers simple questions about it
- _____ Hear and understand most of what is said at home and in school
- _____ Make voice sounds clear like other children's (not breathy or hoarse)
- _____ Use sentences that give lots of details (e.g., "I like to read my books")
- _____ Tell stories that stick to the topic
- _____ Communicate easily with other children and adults
- _____ Say most sounds correctly (except perhaps certain ones such as *l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, th*)----Strangers should have no trouble at all understand what the child is saying.
- _____ **NOT** substitute sounds in words, such as "otay" instead of "okay" or "kop" instead of "top" (even if the substitutions might be cute to family/others)
- _____ Use the same grammar as the rest of the family/peers and words are in the correct order in sentences
- _____ Talk easily without repeating syllables or words

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5 Years to 6 Years

Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 5 year olds (Gift Year & Kindergarten) should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

A child between the ages of 5 and 6 years should be able to:

- Produce an expressive vocabulary that is about 2,100 to 2,200 words
- Follow 2-3 simple directions in a sequence
- Listen to and understand age-appropriate stories read aloud
- Follow a simple conversation
- Be understood by most people
- Produce all speech sounds except /l/ and /r/
- Use a clear voice (no hoarseness or breathiness)
- Talk easily without repeating syllables or words
- Answer simple "yes/no" questions
- Answer open-ended questions (e.g., "What did you have for lunch today?")
- Retell a story or talk about an event
- Participate appropriately in conversations
- Show interest in and start conversations
- Know how a book works (e.g., read from left to right/top to bottom in English)
- Understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds
- Identify words that rhyme (e.g., *cat* and *hat*)

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6 Years to 7 Years Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 6-7 year olds should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

A child between the ages of 6 and 7 should be able to:

- Produce an expressive vocabulary that is approximately 2,600 words and understand (receptive vocabulary) between 20,000 and 24,000
- Remember information
- Respond to instructions and follow multiple step directions in a sequence
- Be easily understood by all listeners
- Produce all speech sounds used in English
- Does not have breathy or hoarse voice
- Talk easily without repeating syllables or words
- Answer more complex "yes/no" questions
- Tell and retell stories and events in a logical order
- Express ideas with a variety of complete sentences
- Use most parts of speech (grammar) correctly
- Ask and respond to "wh" questions (who, what, where, when, why)
- Stay on topic and take turns in conversation
- Give directions

- _____ Start conversations
- _____ Create rhyming words
- _____ Read grade-level material fluently
- _____ Understand what he/she reads

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7 Years to 8 Years Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 7 to 8 year olds should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

- _____ Remember information
- _____ Respond to instructions and follow multiple step directions in a sequence
- _____ Have a clear voice (no breathiness or hoarseness)
- _____ Be easily understood (clear speech with no sound substitutions. Should have mastered all speech sounds.
- _____ Produce smooth speech with no repeating sounds, syllables, words
- _____ Answer more complex "yes/no" questions
- _____ Tell and retell stories and events in a logical order
- _____ Express ideas with a variety of complete sentences
- _____ Use most parts of speech (grammar) correctly
- _____ Ask and respond to "wh" questions (who, what, where, when, why)
- _____ Stay on topic and take turns in conversation
- _____ Give directions
- _____ Start conversations
- _____ Create rhyming words
- _____ Identify all sounds in short words
- _____ Blend separate sounds to form words
- _____ Match spoken words with print

- _____ Know how a book works (e.g., read from left to right and top to bottom in English)
- _____ Identify letters, words, and sentences
- _____ Sound out words when reading
- _____ Read grade-level material fluently
- _____ Understand what is read
- _____ Express ideas through writing
- _____ Print clearly and spell frequently used words correctly
- _____ Begin each sentence with capital letters and use ending punctuation
- _____ Write a variety of stories, journal entries, or letters/notes

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8 Years to 9 Years Speech/Language Skills

The following is a list of communication behaviors that 8 to 9 year olds should be able to do. Please refer any child in this age range who has difficulty in completing any of the expected skills. If you are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact the speech therapist and she will discuss it with you or make time to observe the child in question. Thank you.

- _____ Follow 3-4 oral directions in a sequence
- _____ Understand direction words (e.g., location, space, and time words)
- _____ Correctly answer questions about a grade-level story
- _____ Be easily understood (no errors in speech sounds)
- _____ Answer more complex "yes/no" questions
- _____ Ask and answer "wh" questions (e.g., who, what, where, when, why)
- _____ Use increasingly complex sentence structures
- _____ Clarify and explain words and ideas
- _____ Give directions with 3-4 steps
- _____ Use oral language to inform, to persuade, and to entertain
- _____ Stay on topic, take turns, and use appropriate eye contact during conversation
- _____ Open and close conversation appropriately
- _____ Have fully mastered phonics/sound awareness
- _____ Associate speech sounds, syllables, words, and phrases with their written forms
- _____ Recognize many words by sight
- _____ Use meaning clues when reading (e.g., pictures, titles/headings, information in the story)
- _____ Reread and self-correct when necessary

- _____ Locate information to answer questions
- _____ Explain key elements of a story (e.g., main idea, main characters, plot)
- _____ Use own experience to predict and justify what will happen in grade-level stories
- _____ Read, paraphrase/retell a story in a sequence
- _____ Read grade-level stories, poetry, or dramatic text silently and aloud with fluency
- _____ Use a variety of sentence types in writing essays, poetry, or short stories (fiction and nonfiction)
- _____ Use basic punctuation and capitalization appropriately
- _____ Organize writing to include beginning, middle, and end
- _____ Spell frequently used words correctly
- _____ Progress from inventive spelling (e.g., spelling by sound) to more accurate spelling

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Common Symptoms of a Language Disorder in Older Students

(taken from *Communication Disorders in the Classroom: 2nd Edition*, pg. 118)

Language and communication abilities greatly affect academic and social success. It is quite possible that a student struggling to learn may have a language-based learning problem and a referral to a speech language pathologist would be warranted. Language difficulties can appear in the student's comprehension (listening and reading) and/or expression (speaking and writing).

The following symptoms frequently appear in students who are academically low-achieving or who the teacher considers "academically at-risk." However, the list should not be considered all-inclusive or exhaustive.

- Word finding/retrieval deficits**
- Use of a large number of words in an attempt to explain a concept because the name escapes them (circumlocutions)**
- Overuse of limited vocabulary**
- Difficulty recalling names of items in categories**
- Difficulty retrieving verbal opposites**
- Small vocabulary**
- Use of words lacking specificity (thing, junk, stuff, etc.)**
- Inappropriate use of words (selection of wrong word)**
- Difficulty defining words**
- Less comprehension of complex words**
- Failure to grasp double word meanings (e.g., can, file, etc.)**

- Use of grammatically incorrect sentence structures**
- Simple, as opposed to complex, sentences**
- Less comprehension of complex grammatical structures**
- Semantically empty placeholders (e.g., filled pauses, "uh", "er", "um")**
- Use of many stereotyped phrases that do not require much language skill**
- Use of "starters" (e.g., "you know.." or "it's like.....")**

- Use of redundant expressions and information the listener has already heard**
- Use of nonspecific vocabulary (e.g., thing, stuff) and the listener cannot tell from prior conversation or physical context what is referred to.**
- Less skill in giving explanations clearly to a listener (lack of detail)**
- Less skill in explaining something in a proper sequence**
- Less conversational control in terms of introducing, maintaining and changing topics (may get off the track in conversation and introduce new topics awkwardly)**
- Rare use of clarification questions (e.g., "I don't understand")**
- Difficulty shifting conversational style in different social situations (e.g, peer vs. teacher; child vs. adult)**

- _____ **Difficulty grasping the “main idea” of a story or lecture (preoccupation with irrelevant details)**
- _____ **Trouble making inferences from material not explicitly stated (e.g., “Sally went outside. She had to put up her umbrella” Inference: it was raining)**
- _____ **Difficulty understanding and/or using humor appropriately.**

A referral for a speech/language screening and/or evaluation is indicated for the following students:

1. Any student who is experiencing sustained academic problems (consistent below average grades, retention in a grade);
2. Students who have been diagnosed as learning-disabled and are experiencing academic difficulty;
3. Students who exhibit obvious problems with reading (either orally or reading comprehension);
4. Any student who appears to have trouble with communication in spoken language. More specifically, the teacher should watch for the following symptoms:
 - a. Inability to explain something clearly and concisely.
 - b. Problems with sequencing information appropriately.
 - c. Problems staying on the topic of conversation.
 - d. Problems understanding and/or giving directions.
 - e. Evidence of retrials, hesitations, filled pauses, and such.
 - f. Word-finding problems.
 - g. Inappropriate use of words.
 - h. Grammatically incorrect sentence structures.
5. Any student who has any difficulty with speech sounds.
Ex: a child who says “wabbit” instead of “rabbit” or any child who you think may have a lisp...”houth” instead of “House”...etc.
6. Any student who has poor vocal quality (hoarseness, strangled-sounding, etc.)
7. Any student who seems to have a hard time getting words out even though he/she may know what it is they are trying to say.

If you have any questions or are unsure if a referral is necessary, please contact me for a consultation (by phone or in person).

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