

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU NEED TO SEE A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST AND HOW TO GET AN APPOINTMENT

WHO IS A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST?

A speech pathologist is a trained health professional who works with anyone who has speech, language or literacy difficulties. Below is the list of other problems they can help with:

SPEECH DELAYS

For example, difficulty making or combining sounds in words and sentences.

LANGUAGE DELAY

For example, trouble understanding what other people say or trouble using words and sentences to express ideas.

STUTTERING

VOICE PROBLEMS LIKE HOARSENESS OR BREATHINESS

DIFFICULTIES WITH SOCIAL SKILLS

LITERACY DIFFICULTIES including spelling, reading and writing difficulties

HELP CHILDREN WHO HAVE TROUBLE FEEDING

DIFFICULTIES WITH SWALLOWING FOOD AND DRINK

WHEN MIGHT YOU NEED TO SEE ONE?

- Your child may have problems being understood by other people.
- They may have problems understanding what people say.
- Have a husky voice that's hard to hear.
- They are frustrated because they can't say what they want to say or can't be understood by others.
- They often stutter.
- They have difficulties with spelling, reading or writing.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE APPOINTMENT?

During the session

- Discussion about what your child has difficulty with.
- You will be asked about your child's development, including their medical history.
- Completing tests and activities to look at your child's talking and understanding.
- Examination of your child's mouth to make sure there are no physical problems that could be making it hard for your child to speak.

After the assessment

- Discussion about your child's communication skills.
- You may get a report about your child's speech and language skills and some ideas to work on.



BEFORE GOING TO A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

- Understand why your child needs to see a speech pathologist.
- Write down any concerns or questions you have about your child's speech or language.
- Does the appointment need to be in person, or can it be via telehealth?
- How long before you can get an appointment to see the speech pathologist?
- Is there anything you can do while you're waiting for the appointment? For example, can your child start some therapy?
- Check for the costs. Some speech pathologist services are free, and other services charge fees. If there's a fee, you might be able to get a Medicare or private health insurance rebate or NDIS support.
- Find out where you have to go to see the speech pathologist - for example, a public or private hospital, private clinic, or community health centre. Many private speech pathologists use telehealth, particularly for families living in rural and remote areas.
- You don't need a GP referral to see a speech pathologist, but your **GP** or **child and family health nurse** is a good place to start if you're worried about your child's health or development.
- These professionals can help you decide about seeing a speech pathologist and help you find someone who's right for your child. You can also use Speech Pathology Australia - **Find a speech pathologist**.

Scan the QR code to know more



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