Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
General Supervision

Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities
Section B.13: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Speech Impairments

Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, and 300.306
Sections 1003.01, 1003.57, 1012.44 and 1011.62, F.S.
Chapters 458, 459, and 468, Part I, F.S.
Rules 6A-4.01761, 6A-6.03012 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

Definitions

1. Speech impairments are disorders of speech sounds, fluency, or voice that interfere with communication, adversely affect performance or functioning in the educational environment, and result in the need for exceptional student education.
   a. Speech sound disorder. A speech sound disorder is a phonological or articulation disorder that is evidenced by the atypical production of speech sounds characterized by substitutions, distortions, additions, or omissions that interfere with intelligibility. A speech sound disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.
      i. Phonological disorder. A phonological disorder is an impairment in the system of phonemes and phoneme patterns within the context of spoken language.
      ii. Articulation disorder. An articulation disorder is characterized by difficulty in the articulation of speech sounds that may be due to a motoric or structural problem.
   b. Fluency disorder. A fluency disorder is characterized by deviations in continuity, smoothness, rhythm, or effort in spoken communication. It may be accompanied by excessive tension and secondary behaviors, such as struggle and avoidance. A fluency disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.
   c. Voice disorder. A voice disorder is characterized by the atypical production or absence of vocal quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, or duration of phonation that is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

Eligibility Criteria

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with a speech impairment if the student meets the following criteria for one or more of the following disorders as determined by the procedures prescribed in this rule and subsection 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C.

1. Speech sound disorder

A student with a speech sound disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of a significant phonological or articulation disorder that is characterized by the atypical production of speech sound(s). The atypical production of speech sound(s) may be characterized by substitutions, distortions, additions, or omissions. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

   a. The speech sound disorder must have a significant impact on the student’s intelligibility, although the student may be intelligible to familiar listeners or within known contexts
   b. The student’s phonetic or phonological inventory must be significantly below that expected for his or her chronological age or developmental level based on normative data
The speech sound disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the student's typical learning environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.

d. The speech sound disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

2. Fluency disorder

A student with a fluency disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of significant and persistent interruptions in the rhythm or rate of speech. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

a. The student must exhibit significant and persistent dysfluent speech behaviors. The dysfluency may include repetition of phrases, whole words, syllables, and phonemes; prolongations; blocks; and circumlocutions. Additionally, secondary behaviors, such as struggle and avoidance, may be present.

b. The fluency disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.

c. The dysfluency is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

3. Voice disorder

A student with a voice disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of significant and persistent atypical voice characteristics. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

a. The student must exhibit significant and persistent atypical production of quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, or duration of phonation. The atypical voice characteristics may include inappropriate range, inflection, loudness, excessive nasality, breathiness, hoarseness, or harshness.

b. The voice disorder does not refer to vocal disorders that are found to be the direct result or symptom of a medical condition unless the disorder adversely affects the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment and is amenable to improvement with therapeutic intervention.

c. The voice disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.

d. The atypical voice characteristics are not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

4. The student demonstrates a need for special education.