

Does My School-Aged Child Need Speech Therapy for R or S?

Most kids have learned to make all of the sounds we use for speech by the time they begin school. A few sounds might take a little while longer for kids to master, including *R*, *S*, *L*, and *TH*. Older children who still cannot say one or more speech sounds correctly may have a speech sound disorder.

How do you know if you should get help from an SLP?

Here are some signs that warrant speech therapy for your school-aged child.

- Your child can't make 1 or more speech sounds the same way an adult does
- Your child does not feel confident talking or is embarrassed because of their speech
- You as the parent are concerned about the way your child sounds when they talk
- Teachers, family, or friends have said that they have a hard time understanding some things your child says

Can my child get speech therapy at school?

For kids who are school-aged, asking for a speech-language evaluation through the public school district is a good first step. You can start by talking to your child's teacher or your school's SLP, or you can request a screening through the Special Education department of your school district. Speech therapy services are provided when a speech/language disorder is making it hard for a child to learn and participate in school. If your child qualifies, speech therapy can be provided at school within your child's school day. It is convenient and free of out-of-pocket cost to you.

My child didn't qualify at school. What other options are there?

Sometimes, older kids who have trouble with one or two speech sounds might not qualify for speech therapy in school. Other times, being pulled out of class to go to speech therapy during the day might be disruptive to learning or cause stress or embarrassment to a tween or teenager. Parents should know that qualified SLPs practice in a variety of settings, including schools, private practices, hospitals, outpatient clinics, and via teletherapy. You can look on ASHA ProFind to find certified SLPs in your area.

How long will speech therapy take?

In general, the longer a person has been making a speech error in their everyday talking (in other words, the older a child is), the more time and effort it will take to change that pattern. However, numerous other factors also affect how long therapy will take, so it will be different for everyone.

A speech sound disorder that affects “only” one sound can have a significant and lasting impact on a person. There is no age that is too old to be able to correct a speech sound error; an SLP can help at any age.

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