

ENGLISH LEARNERS



Speech-Language Disorders

Considerations

- The English learner is exhibiting difficulties in both the primary and English languages.
- Both the general education teacher and the English learner specialist indicate the English learner is performing differently from his “like peers.”
- The English learner displays very little or no progress resulting from appropriate differentiated instructional strategies and intensive interventions.
- Parents indicate that difficulties seen at school also occur at home.

Factors That Influence Language Development

- Systematic and targeted English language development instruction
- Explicit instruction in oral and written communication
- Opportunities for student interaction
- Instruction and practice using a variety of talk structures
- Explicit feedback on grammar and vocabulary errors
- Sufficient wait time to process language
- Instructional strategies and assignments that match language level
- at home.

Learn more from the sources below:

California Practitioners’ Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities.

Colorín Colorado’s Myths About English Language Learners and Special Education

Myth Vs. Reality

Myth: A student's level of English proficiency is a measure of intelligence.

Reality: Students come with a level of proficiency in their native language. Learning a second language is difficult and requires a lot of brainpower.

Myth: Students who rarely speak have a speech delay or auditory processing disorder.

Reality: Some English learners go through a "silent period." It's not unlike when children first acquire a language. They understand what they hear before they learn how to speak.

Myth: If we identify an English learner for special education, they will get the support that they need.

Reality: Interventions that target processing, linguistic, or cognitive disabilities often do not help children acquire English language proficiency. In addition, we are giving the student a label that is not needed. A special education placement in and of itself is not an appropriate strategy to help.

Myth: Schools should wait a certain amount of time before assessing an English learner for special education services.

Reality: We do not withhold support while the student is acquiring proficiency. If a student has difficulty, then it likely exists in all of the student's languages.

Myth: When an EL has a disability, instruction should be in English only to not confuse the student.

Reality: Disabilities do not come from being bilingual. Developing a student's native language can help students with a language impairment make more progress in English.