

FINDING HELP for Your Child's Speech and Language at School: From Toddler to Teenager

If you are concerned about your child's speech and language skills, you can get help from your local school district through their Child Find program. Your child may need to see a professional called a speech-language pathologist, or SLP for short. **The SLP will work with you and your child. The earlier you get help, the better.**

WHERE TO START: Toddlers/Preschoolers

If your child's age is toddler through preschool, call your school system's main office to ask about a free Child Find screening. Child Find is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. **Your child's speech and language skills—along with hearing, vision, learning, social, and motor skills—may be screened to see if an evaluation is needed.**

WHERE TO START: School-Age Children

If your child is school age, contact the public school your child attends to ask about a speech-language screening with your school's SLP. This is also a free service. The screening results may show that your child is developing as expected or that your child may need a speech-language evaluation by an SLP. **An SLP looks at how well a child expresses themselves, reads, and writes.**

Next Steps

After the evaluation of your toddler, preschooler, or school-age child, you and a team of school professionals will discuss your child's need for special education services, such as speech-language therapy. If needed, an Individualized Family Service Plan (for children ages 0–3) or an **Individualized Education Program, or IEP** (for people ages 3–21), will be written. The IEP lists the goals that the child will work on with the SLP and/or teachers.

If your child does not qualify for services in the school, you may seek services from a private speech-language pathologist. To find an ASHA-certified SLP in your area, visit www.asha.org/profind.

You can find more information on your state's parent information and resources center at <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>.



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