

# Speech and Language Therapy

## What Is Speech and Language Therapy?

Speech and language therapy for children offers support and care to kids who have trouble communicating or difficulty eating, drinking and swallowing. A speech-language pathologist (SLP) is a medical professional who evaluates and treats communication and swallowing disorders. They are sometimes called "speech therapists." SLPs work with infants, children, adolescents and adults.

## Conditions Speech-Language Pathologists Treat

Speech-language pathologists treat children who have a wide variety of disabilities, complex conditions and serious injuries that cause problems with communication and swallowing, especially in the following areas:

**Speech Sound Disorders:** Problems in this area affect how a person says sounds and how well they can be understood by others when talking. These are sometimes called articulation disorders, phonological disorders, apraxia of speech or motor speech disorders like dysarthria.

**Language:** Problems in this area affect how well a person understands what they hear or read (ie, receptive language) and how well a person uses words to tell others what they are thinking or feeling (ie, expressive language).

**Literacy:** Literacy refers to how well a person reads and writes. People with speech and language disorders may also have trouble reading, spelling, and writing.

**Social Communication/Pragmatics:** Problems in this area affect how well a person follows unspoken social rules of communication like turn-taking, eye contact, personal space when talking with others, etc.

**Voice and Resonance:** Problems in this area affect how a person's voice sounds. Sometimes individuals can have problems with their voice that make them sound too loud or too soft, breathy, hoarse, or harsh. Sometimes people have problems with too much or too little air getting into their nose during speech. This can make them sound nasal.

**Fluency:** Problems in this area are commonly called "stuttering". This refers to how smooth speech is or how well it flows. People that have fluency disorders may repeat one part of a word (ie, t-t-t-table), the whole word (today, today, today I want candy) or they might use a lot of pauses like "um" or "uh", and their face or body might get tense when they get stuck on a word. Many young children go through a normal period of stuttering that they typically outgrow within 1 to 2 years after it appears for the first time. This usually happens around the time children are in preschool or kindergarten.

**Cognitive-Communication:** Problems in this area affect how well a person's mind works. This can mean issues with short and long-term memory, attention, solving problems, organizing thoughts and other thinking skills.

**Feeding and Swallowing:** Problems in this area affect how well a person's mouth and throat work when chewing and swallowing different foods and drinks. Babies may have problems with drinking from a bottle or an open cup.

Sometimes people have trouble moving their tongue or lips or may cough or choke when they eat or drink certain foods and liquids.

Whether your child has no known medical diagnosis, a lifelong condition such as **cerebral palsy** or needs care following a serious injury that is affecting their ability to communicate, a speech-language pathologist can address speech problems and other complications to help them feel more comfortable communicating and navigating their world.

## Speech and Language Pathology Tests and Treatments

Supported by the latest equipment and techniques, your child has many options for outpatient therapy and inpatient care at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. We have a diverse team of specialists that work closely together to help children achieve their best. In addition to facilitating speech therapy activities, we help you coordinate care with other specialists to provide:

- **Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)** assessments.
- Cognitive therapy for concussions and **traumatic brain injury**.
- **Nutrition and feeding** services.
- Specialty care for **cleft lip and palate** and other craniofacial conditions.
- **Swallowing** studies (videofluoroscopy and fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing) for feeding disorders (dysphagia).
- VitalStim or **neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) therapy** for the treatment of swallowing disorders.

## Integrated Care

Many children who have complex conditions and disabilities can improve their function and independence with the help of speech and language therapy.

Find out how speech and language therapies at Gillette can help your child to succeed.

Your child will work with a team of specialists who understand the challenges of kids who have conditions such as **cerebral palsy**, or who experience speech delay. Gillette offers the Twin Cities' only pediatric comprehensive **inpatient rehabilitation program** certified by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Gillette is one of eight U.S. pediatric inpatient rehabilitation facilities to have CARF accreditation for both its pediatric specialty and pediatric brain injury programs.

As part of their treatment at Gillette, your child might receive care from providers across our many specialties, including:

- **Assistive technology**.
- **Child life**.
- **Craniofacial and plastic surgery**.

- Music therapy.
- Neurology.
- Neuropsychology.
- Nutrition and feeding.
- Orthopedics.
- Psychology.
- Radiology and imaging.
- Rehabilitation medicine.
- Social work.
- Therapeutic recreation.

## Locations



## [St. Paul Campus](#)



## [Burnsville Clinic](#)



## [Maple Grove Clinic](#)



## [Minnetonka Therapies](#)

Make An Appointment [651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707) Refer a Patient [651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).