



What is Expressive Language?

What is it?

- *Expressive Language* refers to the output of language. A child may communicate, or express themselves, through speaking, writing, or assistive technology. Children typically *know* more than what they can express. Expressive language supports social relationships through explaining, storytelling and relating to others.
- Expressive language skills include, but are not limited to:
 - Speaking or writing using developmentally appropriate grammar, prefixes, suffixes
 - Speaking or writing while following appropriate word order
 - Speaking or writing complex or compound sentences
 - Knowledge of sounds and rhyming
 - Vocabulary development
 - Telling stories, summarizing information, expressing ideas or feelings
- If your child has been referred for a Speech and Language Screening for concerns related to *Expressive Language*, they may have displayed the following, but not limited to:
 - Difficulty explaining a concept, or expressing their needs
 - Word-finding difficulty (i.e., “um, what’s that thing?”)
 - Lack of organized storytelling or summarizing
 - Limited sound-letter knowledge, difficulty with rhyming, breaking apart sounds in a word or blending them together
 - Challenges learning and using new vocabulary
 - Difficulty acquiring and using prefixes, suffixes, verbs, plurals at a developmentally typical rate.
 - Shorter than developmentally typical spoken utterances (i.e., *Dog bark* versus *The brown dog barked at the large, gray cat*)

The Role of the Speech-Language Therapist and *Expressive Language*

- The speech-language therapist plays a vital, direct role in literacy, which is intertwined with expressive language domains. The speech-language pathologist has specialized knowledge diagnosing and treating “atypical” versus “typical” language development. Expressive language (speaking and writing) is the foundational building block for reading and writing.¹

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2001). *Roles and responsibilities of speech-language pathologists with respect to reading and writing in children and adolescents* [Position Statement]. Available from www.asha.org/policy.

Intervention and support in the classroom:

- According to the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, “*Children with a spoken language disorder often have difficulty learning to read and write.*”²
- Children who present with an Expressive Language Disorder, Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), Written Language Disorder, or need additional support with expressive language skills, will benefit from explicit instruction from a speech-language therapist to address the following:
 - Vocabulary breadth and depth, or learning and understanding new words presented in the curriculum
 - Summarizing textual information in the child’s own words
 - Using prefixes and suffixes in an appropriate way considering context
 - Expanding on simpler sentences to make compound / complex sentences using conjunctions
 - Providing structure for narrative language through retelling and conversation

If you’re interested in Speech-Language services at AIM for your child, please contact supportservices@aimpa.org

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *Spoken language disorders* [Practice portal]. <https://www.Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Spoken-Language-Disorders/>