

FACT SHEET



DID YOU KNOW... that 1 in 10 Canadians has a speech, language or hearing problem.

- Speech and hearing problems affect tens of thousands of individuals.
- Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic disability among older adults, behind arthritis and hypertension.
- Approximately 10% of the general population, 20% of those over 65 and 40% of those over 75 (including 80% of nursing home residents) have a significant hearing problem.
- Both the incidence and prevalence of hearing loss increase with age. The onset of adult hearing loss can start as early as the third or fourth decade of life.
- Communication disorders in school-aged children are often misdiagnosed as learning disabilities or behavioural problems, and can be very difficult to treat in later years. Children with behavioural problems are ten times more likely than other children to have language disorders.
- An estimated 4% of the preschool population has a significant speech or language disorder.
- An estimated 1 % of Canadians and 4% of preschoolers stutter; men are four times more likely to stutter than women.
- A child should use 200 or more words by the time they are 2-3 years old and by the age of 4 1/2 their vocabulary should consist of approximately 2000 words.

Common Communication Disorders in Children

- Articulation disorders (omitting, substituting, or distorting language sounds)
Example: saying “wabbit” instead of “rabbit.”
- Voice problems (clarity, volume, pitch, hoarseness)
- Stuttering (hesitations, syllable or word repetitions, and restarts).
- Language difficulties.

Common Types of Adult Communication Disorders

All can be common after stroke or head injury. Dysarthria also occurs in cerebral palsy and other degenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, and ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease).

Aphasia (*pronounced A•FAY•SHA*)

A language disorder due to brain damage or disease resulting in difficulty in formulating, expressing, and /or understanding language.

Apraxia (*pronounced A•PRAX•SIA*)

A speech programming disorder which makes words and sentences sound jumbled or meaningless.

Dysarthria (*pronounced DIS•AR•THREE•AH*)

A group of speech disorders resulting from paralysis, weakness, or lack of coordination of the muscles required for speech.

Dysphagia (*pronounced DIS•FAY•JAH*)

Swallowing disorders are common with all of the above and are also assessed and treated by speech-language pathologists.

Over →

Types of Speech and Language Disorders

- **Articulation Disorders:** occur when a person cannot correctly pronounce one or more sounds. This may occur as a result of delayed development, poor muscle control, cleft lip/palate, hearing impairment or learning disabilities. Errors of many sounds that form patterns are called **phonological disorders**. Articulation disorders caused as a result of neurological damage such as stroke or head injury are termed **motor speech disorder**.
- **Voice disorders:** include inappropriate pitch, loudness, quality (hoarseness) or total voice loss. May result from damage to the vocal cords due to surgery, misuse of the voice, (overuse, yelling or singing) disease (cancer of the larynx), or other conditions (cleft palate, cerebral palsy or hearing impairment).
- **Fluency disorders:** (stuttering) a disruption in the normal flow of rhythm of speech. Characteristics may include repetition of sounds, syllables, words or phrases, hesitations, prolongations or interjections. Behaviours can vary from person to person.

Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists

Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are professionals that identify, evaluate and rehabilitate children and adults who have speech, language or hearing disorders. S-LP's help individuals overcome and prevent communication problems in language, speech, voice and fluency. Audiologists assess the extent of hearing loss, balance as well as other related disorders and recommend appropriate solutions such as hearing aids.

Speech-language pathologists and audiologists work in private practice, child development centres, pre-schools, schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, government agencies, health units, industry, colleges, universities and research centres.

CASLPA

The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, located in Ottawa, Ontario, is the national voice of professionals who help Canadians communicate. A not-for-profit association, serving 4,800 professional members, CASLPA supports the needs of its members through a wide variety of services, programs and personal benefits, including a national certification program for individuals and site accreditation for facilities.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN CANADA PREVALENCE BY PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION:

Age Group	Speech in %	Language in %	Voice in %	Stuttering in %
0-4	5-10	2-5	6	2-5
5-19	5-10	5-10	6	4-8
20-64	6	6	1-6	1
65+	12	12	6+	1

**These statistics are a 1996 composite of a number of sources including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Statistics Canada, and provincial associations of speech-language pathology and audiology.*

Early detection is vital! If you suspect a problem consult your yellow pages or visit our website to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist near you.

www.caslpa.ca