

SLP Vocabulary 101

Receptive Language:

Quite simply, this is the information that we “receive” from others. We can determine how much a child is “receiving” by how well they can follow directions, answer questions, etc.

Expressive Language:

Basically, how you express yourself to others. We tend to think of “language” as the “words” we use, but this can also include non-verbal means of communication.

Non-Verbal Communication: This can include gestures (like pointing and waving), body language (like turning away from someone to end a conversation), and facial expressions. Just as vital as “verbal communication,” this is one aspect of language that is difficult for many children to grasp (particularly students on the Autism Spectrum, students with ADHD, and students with Non-Verbal Learning Disability).

Pragmatics:

The social aspects of language. This deals with those “hidden rules” that just about everyone seems to know – you respond when someone greets you, you add to conversations with a comment on the same (or similar) topic, you don’t insult the person with whom you are speaking. This is another aspect of language that is particularly difficult for students on the Autism Spectrum and other disabilities.

Syntax:

This has to do with the rules that govern how we organize words into sentences.

Semantics:

Refers to the meaning of a message.

Morphemes:

Words (and parts of words) that carry meaning. For example, “yawn” indicates something you do when you’re tired (1 morpheme), “yawn**ed**” indicates (1) what you do, and (2) when you did it (2 morphemes).

Jargon:

Consonant-vowel sequences that mimic the intonation patterns of adult speech, but do not consist of true words. I often hear parents refer to this as “gibberish.”

Fluency:

The rhythm and flow of speech. A disruption in that flow (dysfluency) is commonly known as stuttering.

Articulation:

How you say the sounds within the words. A child with an articulation delay/disorder has difficulty producing one or some sounds.

Phonology:

An internal classification system for sounds.

When a child has a phonological problem, they have difficulty with entire classes of sounds (e.g., sounds made from the back of the mouth or sounds made with prolonged air-flow). Their errors fall into “patterns” called **“phonological processes.”** A child with a phonological disorder is generally more difficult to understand than a child with an articulation disorder.