



Throughout the day you talk to family, friends, and colleagues. You use your hearing and speech all the time. You probably take them for granted. Imagine not being able to communicate simple thoughts like "Thank you" or "Tell me a story." For many Canadians with speech and language disorders, this is reality. For them, words don't come easily. But when is the last time you really thought about it? **National Speech-Language-Hearing Month** is the perfect time to communicate some important information about hearing and speech.

National Speech-Language-Hearing Month is celebrated each May to raise public awareness of speech and language disorders that affect many Canadians. Speech and language disorders can take many forms and can limit academic achievement, social adjustment, and career advancement. An individual may be born with a speech or language disorder, or it may be caused by accidental injury or illness.

One in 10 Canadians has a hearing, speech, or language problem, a condition that makes it difficult to communicate with others. Anyone, of any age, can have or develop an impairment of the ability to hear, speak, or understand effectively. At any time, illness or accidental injury can impair your ability to hear and talk. Treatment to eliminate or minimize communication problems is available.

A child's ability to communicate effectively is critical to their learning, future reading and writing success, academic performance, social interactions, and even their behavior. Speech and language disorders are generally treatable, and even reversible or preventable in some cases with early intervention. Unfortunately, many parents who have concerns are told to 'wait and see' if their child's difficulties resolve on their own—often by well-meaning friends, family members, and sometimes even professionals. Early detection of communication disorders is vital!

If you suspect a hearing, speech, or language problem, contact a communication specialist such as a Speech-Language Pathologist or Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. A listing of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists is available by contacting the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) at 1-800-993-9459 or visit www.caslpo.com.

To learn more about the importance of early detection and intervention of communication disorders, and the role of Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists and Communicative Disorders Assistants, visit:

- ASHA Resources www.asha.org/public
- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) www.maymonth.ca
- ASHA Identify the Signs <https://identifythesigns.org>
- ASHA Developmental Milestones <https://www.asha.org/public/developmental-milestones/>
- Parent Guide for Supporting Success at School <http://oafccd.com/oafccd-resources/parent-guide-for-supporting-success-at-school/#pguide>



Hearing

Many of us take our ability to communicate for granted. Yet the ability to speak, hear and be heard is much more vital to our everyday lives than most of us realize. Each year, Speech-Language and Audiology Canada dedicates the month of May to raising public awareness about communication disorders and the professionals who can help.

Common Hearing & Other Auditory Disorders:

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is a partial or total inability to hear. The severity of the hearing impairment can range from mild to profound and can be in one or both ears. There are different types of hearing loss, which are caused by problems in different parts of the outer, middle and inner ear as well as the hearing nerve. Hearing loss can be caused by the natural aging process, excessive exposure to noise, head trauma, a history of ear infections or hereditary factors.

Auditory Processing Disorder

Auditory processing disorder (or APD) is a disorder that affects the way the brain processes sound – in other words, what the brain does with what the ear hears. Some symptoms of APD include poor listening, trouble following directions, short attention span and difficulty reading. People with APD can have normal hearing and APD is not related to intelligence.

Tinnitus

Tinnitus (TIN-A-TUS) refers to “ringing in the ears” when no other sound is present. Tinnitus can sound like hissing, roaring, pulsing, whooshing, chirping, whistling or clicking. Tinnitus can occur in one ear or both ears and while tinnitus is often associated with hearing loss, people with normal hearing can also have it. Sometimes the sounds are accompanied by pressure or pain in or around the ear or by a painful sensitivity to sounds. The impact of tinnitus ranges from annoying to debilitating.

Hyperacusis

Hyperacusis is a health condition characterized by an over-sensitivity to certain sounds. A person with severe hyperacusis has difficulty tolerating everyday sounds, some of which may seem unpleasantly loud to that person but not to other people. Although all sounds may be perceived as too loud, high frequency (pitch) sounds may be particularly troublesome.

www.communicationhealth.ca

May is Speech and Hearing Month
maymonth.ca



Speech-Language &
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1 in 6 people
has a speech, language
or hearing disorder.

TIPS for talking with someone who has a hearing disorder:

- Get the person's attention by saying their name or touching their arm before you start talking.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard, but do NOT shout. Shouting distorts the speech sounds.
- Be patient and provide the person with some extra time to respond. Hearing and processing sounds may take a bit longer.
- Avoid putting anything around your face and mouth when you are speaking (e.g., pens, phones, hands). People with hearing loss use visual cues to help them understand the message. People without hearing loss also use visual cues!
- Create an ideal listening environment: move away from noise sources and choose a place with good lighting.
- Position yourself across from the listener rather than beside. Look at the person when talking.
- During group discussions only one person should speak at a time.
- Smaller group discussions are ideal. Listening in a large group setting can be difficult.

AUDIOLOGISTS are highly-trained hearing health professionals who identify, assess and manage individuals with hearing and balance disorders as well as other auditory disorders.



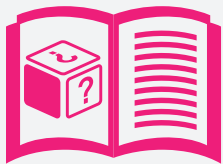
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS

Speech-language pathologists can help.

Children need to learn to read **and read to learn.**

Literacy – the ability to read and write – enables us to communicate with others and learn about our world. To develop **literacy skills**, children first need **speech and language skills**.

Help your child develop strong literacy skills.

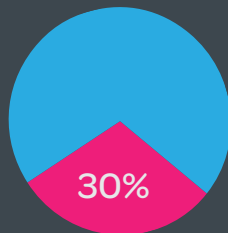


Children start to develop literacy skills by looking at words in their environment, including in books, on signs or in logos. Research has shown that one of the best ways you can promote literacy in your child is by **reading together**.

Children with language impairments are

4 to 5

TIMES MORE LIKELY
to have reading difficulties while in school.



Up to **30%** of children with speech disorders also have a reading disability.

Children with speech or language disorders are more likely to have difficulties with literacy. Follow your child's literacy development by looking out for these milestones:

- 1 YEAR OF AGE:** shows an interest in picture books.
- 2 YEARS OF AGE:** knows to hold books the right way up and turns the pages.
- 3 YEARS OF AGE:** understands that printed words have a function (on menus, lists, signs, etc.).
- 4 YEARS OF AGE:** can think of simple rhymes (e.g., toy and boy).
- 5 YEARS OF AGE:** knows all letters of the alphabet.

Speech-language pathologists can help your child learn to read and write.

Recent research indicates that reading difficulties are primarily **language-based**. Speech-language pathologists can help children who are at risk of developing reading disorders through early identification and intervention. They can also offer treatment programs to children who experience reading difficulties.



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Find a speech-language pathologist near you at
www.communicationhealth.ca

If you think your child may have a reading disorder, consult a speech-language pathologist.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

do more than you think

Speech-language pathologists can help with...

- Swallowing and feeding disorders
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Language disorders related to dementia
- Speech delays and disorders
- Voice and fluency disorders
- Pre-literacy and literacy skills

Speech-language pathologists also work in research, education, advocacy, counselling, policy development and health administration to advance communication health in Canada.



Speech-Language &
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*S-LPs are **professionals with expertise** in assessing and treating a broad range of speech and language delays and disorders in people of all ages.*

Find a speech-language pathologist near you at
[communicationhealth.ca](https://www.communicationhealth.ca)

Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) are Essential Members of Education Teams

Speech-language pathology services support academic success, as well as the social and emotional well-being of students.

S-LPs assist students with:

- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Speaking
- ✓ Vocabulary
- ✓ Social Skills
- ✓ Feeding & Swallowing
- ✓ Augmentative and Alternative Communication



How we help:



Prevention

Our interventions can prevent literacy and secondary behaviour problems.



Collaboration

We contribute to educational goal setting, planning and curriculum accessibility.



Modelling

We participate in team teaching and model intervention activities to caregivers and other educators.



Adaptations

We recommend task adaptations that help students succeed.



Screening & Assessment

Group-administered or one-on-one screenings and assessments guide our interventions and inform school placement decisions.



Identification

We identify speech, language and communication challenges that directly impact student success.



Intervention

Our evidence-informed interventions include individual treatment, small and large group instruction, as well as consulting with other educators.

Speak to your school's S-LP to learn more about school-based speech-language pathology services.



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Committed to Prevention

This brochure offers simple guidelines regarding key communication skills children typically acquire by a certain age.

If any of the following describe your child, he or she may be at risk of a communication disorder.

- low birth weight
- pre-maturity (less than 37 weeks)
- anoxia at birth
- family history of speech, language and/or learning problems
- family history of congenital or progressive hearing loss
- drug/alcohol use during pregnancy
- a history of repeated and/or chronic ear infections
- the child speaks loudly or often asks people to repeat

If any of the above are true of your child, consult a speech-language pathologist or audiologist right away as early intervention is key. You can find communication health professionals in your area at www.communicationhealth.ca.

Communication develops over time and every child develops at his or her own rate. The growth chart in this brochure outlines the ages at which most children will reach speech, language and hearing milestones. If a child does not develop one of the skills at the identified age range, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem. However, if you answer 'No' to most of the items on the checklist at or below a child's age, you should consult a speech-language pathologist and/or an audiologist.

Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

Children are at risk of developing social, emotional, behavioural and/or learning problems if speech, language and/or hearing problems are not identified early. Early intervention is critical for children with communication problems. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are involved in the prevention, identification and treatment of a child's speech, language and hearing disorders in partnership with parents, physicians, educators and health-care providers, as difficulties with communication affect the whole family.

Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) is the national association for speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel working with these professionals in Canada. SAC represents over 6,000 members, championing their professional needs, supporting continuing education and providing a comprehensive range of services, thereby maximizing the communication potential of all people in Canada.



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Speech, Language and Hearing Milestones

Prevent, Protect, Act



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Speech-Language &
Audiology Canada
[Communicating care](http://www.sac-oac.ca)

www.sac-oac.ca

Find a professional near you

www.communicationhealth.ca



YOUR EARS DESERVE AN AUDIOLOGIST

When we have questions about our health, many of us go online for answers. With all of the information available, it is difficult to determine what is best for our health.

Don't leave your hearing health to the internet.

If you suspect you might have hearing loss, go straight to the professional – ***go see an audiologist.***

DID YOU KNOW...

Only **1** in **5** people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.

HOW CAN AN AUDIOLOGIST HELP YOU?

- **Assessment**

Professional assessment is key to determining the degree and type of hearing loss and whether additional medical attention is needed.

- **Hearing Aid Fitting**

If hearing aids are recommended, your audiologist will ensure that you are equipped with technology that best suits your lifestyle.

- **Rehabilitation and Counseling**

Adapting to hearing loss can be challenging. Audiologists help you receive the maximum benefit from your hearing aids.

Audiologists are hearing health professionals with specialized training to assess and treat a broad range of hearing and balance disorders in people of all ages.



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It's time to make your hearing health a priority.

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