

## BIAP Recommendation 15/6

### Inclusion of pupils with specific developmental disorders of speech and language

#### General foreword

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#### Introduction

It is the spirit and purpose of this recommendation to provide optimal education for children with speech and language impairments and to grant them full and effective access to education as well as to prepare them for full and effective participation in society. As educational policies react to the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by changing the framework conditions of the school system, Commission 15 of the BIAP is determined to ensure that the quality of special education for children with speech and language impairments is not affected by these legal measures. If more children are to be educated in mainstream schools, the expertise of a *specialized professional*\* will be even more important to provide optimal support. Only if highly professional expertise is guaranteed, can the influence of the speech and language disorder on the development of the child be minimized and adequate individual support for speech and language be provided - regardless of whether a child is attending a mainstream school or a special school.

#### Scope

This recommendation is to be understood as a **guideline** to ensure an adequate education for children with speech and language impairments, including any special measures that have to be taken in order to provide appropriate learning environments. It could be the basis for educational or pedagogical decision-making and therefore **this recommendation is directed toward** ministries and governments, head-teachers and teachers, kindergarten and preschool staff as well as any other professionals who are involved in the education of children who suffer from severe specific developmental disorders of speech and language potentially affecting school performance.

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\*A specialized professional can be understood as operating in a pedagogic or therapeutic sphere. Each country will have to determine which professional is responsible for which aspect of educational development.

**Recommendation**

From the very outset it appears necessary to identify those **pupils and students** who might be affected by specific developmental disorders of speech and language and who would benefit from this recommendation. Based on the ICD-10 classification (section F80), the following disorders of speech and language are included in this recommendation:

- Specific speech articulation disorder (e.g.: phonological disorder)
- Expressive language disorder (e.g.: specific language impairment, semantic and lexical disorders, syntactical and morphological problems)
- Receptive language disorder
- Impairments relating to the pragmatic use of speech and language
- Acquired aphasia with epilepsy (e.g.: Landau-Kleffner syndrome)
- Other developmental disorders of speech and language, specified or unspecified (e.g.: pervasive developmental disorder)
- Also included are children who suffer from speech and language disorders that are specifically classified nationally as a speech or language disorder (e.g.: APD, autistic spectrum disorder, fluency disorder, mutism, specific reading disorder, specific spelling disorder) as well as syndromes that affect speech and language in any way

The individual and specific disorder results in different **specific needs** experienced by children with speech and language impairments; these needs must be met if the children are to succeed in their school career. The specialized professional responsible for the child must be academically trained in the field of education science of speech and language impairment or have a comparable academic degree.

**Needs relating to educational institutions in general:**

- Special pedagogical methods that meet the needs of the speech and language impaired child
- Special and individualized material that meets the special communication needs of the child in written and spoken language
- Structures that give orientation and relief as well as visualisations
- Content adequately prepared depending on the specific impairment
- Use of additional and combined oral and visual communication methods

**Needs relating to the content and topics of the lessons:**

- Communication, speech and language should be a central feature of the school morning (e.g.: meta-language, monitoring of understanding, communication culture). Furthermore, knowledge of and sensitivity to the differences and the individuality of every speaker must be imparted, also taking account of speech and language impairments.
- Every lesson should be used to improve the communication skills as well as the speech and language skills of the child.
- All modalities should be considered as far as possible

- Each child with a speech and language impairment should be taught appropriate individual strategies to cope with their individual communication disorder.
- Speech and language therapy should be implemented in the lessons.
- The teacher should talk in a professional and helpful manner in order to facilitate understanding and to be a model of language and speech that the impaired child can learn from.
- The content (written and spoken) should be adequately adapted to suit individual competences.

Needs relating to **individual support and individual communication skills**:

- Every child with a speech and language impairment should have an individual project that is continuously updated and based on ongoing diagnostics, the case history and the expertise of a special education teacher for speech and language impaired children. This diagnostics process should be the basis for the preparation of the lessons.
- Some children might need to be taught by a specialized professional, at least in the basic subjects.
- Some children might need individual support, tutoring or therapy that should be directly related to the current content of the general educational program. This support should be provided in individual or small group sessions.
- Special and appropriate communication modalities, e.g. alternative and augmentative methods (lip reading, face to face interaction, signs...), should be employed in every lesson.
- Individualized time charts (concerning the lessons and the general progress of the school career) have to be provided in order to enable pupils to learn and progress at their own pace.
- Grading should consider the specific speech and language disorder to provide a “disability compensation”.

In order to meet the needs of pupils with specific developmental disorders of speech and language, specific **human and institutional resources** should be established. Each country should select and implement strategies that link with its reality and culture. These resources provide the possibility for high-quality work by the specialized education professionals and other professionals involved in the educational process on the one hand, and for high-level support and well-founded information for parents on the other.

In principle it is essential to have **public special educational centres** that are responsible for controlling and supervising the processes related to children with a speech and language impairment. In addition, such centres should provide a forum for ongoing and regular professional exchanges between specialized professionals and also supply relevant information to professionals involved in the educational process. These competence centres should manage the schooling of the child and be in direct contact with the parents. The parents should receive all information that is necessary to make decisions concerning the schooling of their child. Freedom of choice as to where their child should go to school should therefore be highlighted as a central topic to ensure the best welfare of the child.

The school attended by a child with speech and language impairment is obliged to optimize the educational environment according to the needs of the child:

- The child has to be supported by special education competence centres and or specialized schools to meet these demands.
- Every non-specialized professional working with the child should have a basic knowledge of speech and language development and of specific related disorders and receive continuous counselling and/or retraining in that field in order to meet the specific needs of the child.
- Retraining, counselling and supervision are essential for all professionals involved.
- A co-teaching system is the preferred format. A speech and language specialist should be part of the co-teaching team.
- In order to provide the necessary information to all parties involved and to facilitate maximum support for the child, the flow of information and the formal aspects should be straightforward and clear. It should be easy for all professionals involved in the educational process to contact each other. It might also be helpful to appoint a coordinator.

In addition, every educational institution should cooperate in the early screening process and must have contact with special educational centres to provide early diagnosis and early professional intervention as well as informing the parents.

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## References

**United Nations (UN) (2006):** *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.*

**World Health Organization (WHO):** *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).*

**This recommendation was created and approved in a multidisciplinary cooperation between professionals of all audiophonologic disciplines, which are medicine, pedagogy, speech therapy, psychology and hearing instrument audiology.**

**The original language of this document is English.**

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President of the commission 15: Michael MONZ (Germany)

Members of the commission 15: Marie-Christine BIARD (Belgium),  
Marie-Hélène CHOLLET (France), Mireille CLERBEAUX (Belgium),  
Manfred DRACH (Germany), Brigitte LEJEUNE (Belgium), Patrice MOUSSALEM (Lebanon),  
Sabine PIRSON (Belgium), Stéphanie REBEIZ (Lebanon),  
Adoracion Juarez SANCHEZ (Spain), Ghislaine SCHRAM (Switzerland)

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