



Guidelines for Documenting Speech Disability

Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas, such as oral-motor function. These delays and disorders range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech.

Qualified Evaluator: A licensed audiologist or licensed speech-language pathologist would be considered qualified to diagnose a communication disorder and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. Documentation must meet the following criteria:

- include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator,
- be presented on the professional's letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible, and
- the evaluator may not be family member.

Current Documentation: The currency of documentation is dependent upon the nature of the communication disorder. Thus, if the condition that leads to the communication impairment is progressive, DASS will request documentation that is within the last two years. Documentation for non-progressive communication disorders should be five years or less. However, each request will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Comprehensive Documentation of a Communication Disorder should include, but is not limited to:

- A clear statement of the communication disorder with supporting data. A summary of present symptoms which meet the criteria for diagnosis of a communication disorder.
- Medical information relating to the student's needs
- The status of the student's current impairment (static, improving or degrading)
- Its impact on the demands of the academic program
- Narrative or descriptive text providing both quantitative and qualitative information about the student's abilities which might be helpful in understanding the student's profile, including the use of auxiliary aids, hearing aids (if appropriate), etc.
- Suggestions of reasonable accommodation(s) which might be appropriate at the post-secondary level are encouraged. These recommendations should be linked to the impact of the disability.

Supporting Documentation. The qualified evaluator's report, while necessary, is by no means the only documentation we can use to better understand and accommodate the student with a communication disability. Other helpful documents include records of previous accommodation, high school 504 plans or IEP's, previous medical evaluations, report cards, transcripts, and parent, teacher, tutor, or employer reports. DASS reserves the right to access student transcripts (e.g. classes taken and grades earned at SMU) for evaluation purposes.