



Preschool, Kindergarten, and Early Elementary English Language Learners (ELL): Speech and Language Assessment for Special Education

Course Description: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that non-discriminatory assessment be conducted for students who are being considered for special education services. This is a summary of one speech language pathologist's outline and application of best practice approaches to conducting authentic speech and language assessments for preschool, Kindergarten, and early elementary English language learner students in a school located in one of Vermont's Refugee Resettlement Program regions, where 44% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL), with the majority of the families speaking Nepali, Somali/Mai Mai, Swahili/French, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Burmese/Karen.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the key elements in IDEA regulations related to non-discriminatory assessment
2. Recognize the limitations of typical normative sampling and use of standardized tests with most ELL students.
3. Explain the key principles of language acquisition, the universal speech and language milestones related to ELL assessment.
4. Describe speech and language impairment definitions, and key assessment principles related to ELL assessments.
5. Recognize the importance of a multiple measures approach to data gathering for the ELL assessment process, including standards for performance comparison, red flags for primary language impairment, and approaches to record review, interviewing and observation.
6. Identify the general elements of an ELL speech sound assessment, and how speech sound substitutions impact speech intelligibility across select language.

Agenda

8:30-9:00	Introduction and key elements in IDEA regulations related to non-discriminatory assessment
9:00-9:30	Normative sampling, standardized testing, key principles of language acquisition, and universal speech and language milestones related to ELL assessment
9:30-10:00	Speech and language impairment: definitions, key assessment principles related to ELL assessments
10-10:20	Break
10:20-11:00	ELL assessment elements and process: multiple measures approach to data gathering, standards for performance comparison, red flags for primary language impairment, and approaches to record review, interviewing and observation
11-11:30	Speech sound assessment: speech sound substitutions impacting speech intelligibility across languages
11:30-11:50	Questions

Speaker: Catherine Lavigne, MS, CCC-SLP is a speech/language pathologist who works at JFK Elementary School in Winooski, VT. The school is located in a Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program region where 44% of the elementary students are English Language Learners (ELL). She has conducted preschool, Kindergarten, and Early Elementary speech and language assessments with this population. Ms. Lavigne is past president of the Vermont Speech-language-Hearing Association (VSHA) and a member of the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity- Special Interest Group of ASHA. She is also a member of the Northern New England Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NNETESOL).

Disclosure: Ms. Lavigne is employed by the Winooski School district. In lieu of an honorarium, a donation is being made in her name directly to the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program.