

Late Elementary

Communication development is complicated and there are many ways to get to the finish line. This can make it difficult to know when to refer for evaluation and when to wait it out. Keep your eyes out for these red flags along the road. They should never be ignored:

Communication Development: 5 RED FLAGS



LISTENING. 3rd through 5th grade children should be able to follow directions, answer a variety of questions and remember and refer to information. If a child has difficulty understanding, requires “wait time” to process or understand, or struggles with curriculum vocabulary and concepts, a language evaluation may be warranted.



SPEAKING. By late elementary age, most children can express ideas in organized sequences that make sense to the listener. They can also clarify when needed. Difficulty using complete, grammatically correct sentences to explain and answer questions and/or struggles to think of the right word to say may warrant a language evaluation.



SPEECH SOUNDS. By this age, children should correctly produce all speech sounds and their speech should not be distracting to their message. A child who is difficult to understand or has difficulty producing specific speech sounds (including L, R and S) is a candidate for a speech evaluation. Children at this age do not grow out of speech difficulties.



STUTTERING. Late elementary children who are repeating sounds and words, especially with any sort of struggle, tension, force, or stoppage of airflow should be formally assessed. If a student is avoiding or replacing certain words or not wanting to participate in class discussions they may need a communication assessment.



SOCIAL LANGUAGE. By late elementary school, children can have conversations with friends, understand many figures of speech and nonliteral language. They understand unwritten rules of social communication. Difficulty interacting with others may warrant a social communication evaluation.