



| Marana Unified School District | September 2026 Edition |

Welcome to our monthly Speech & Language Newsletter! Each issue highlights important topics in speech, language, and communication, with ideas for families to use at home.

[Si prefiere leer en español, haga clic en el archivo adjunto para la edición en español de nuestro boletín.](#)



Watch My Mouth!

Children learn speech sounds by **hearing and watching** others. Seeing how your lips, teeth, and tongue move can give your child clues about how to make a new sound.

👉 Sit face-to-face and say, **“Watch my mouth!”** Then slowly model the sound or word.

Try it during everyday activities:

- 🪞 **Use a mirror:** Practice together so your child can compare their mouth movements with yours.
- 📖 **While reading:** Pick a few words from the story that have your child’s target sound.
- 🍽️ **At mealtime:** Practice with food words such as *rice*, *soup*, *cheese*, or *cracker*.

💡 **Keep it positive!** A few successful tries during everyday routines can be better than a long practice session that becomes frustrating.



Grammatical Recasting

When children are learning grammar, mistakes are normal. Instead of stopping to correct them, try **grammatical recasting**.

Recasting means repeating your child's message using correct grammar—**without asking them to say it again**.

👉 For example:

- 🧒 "Him eating cookie."
- 🧒 "Yes, **he is eating a cookie!**"
- 🧒 "She goed outside."
- 🧒 "She **went outside!**"
- 🧒 "Two dog."
- 🧒 "I see **two dogs!**"

You can also add a little more language:

- 🧒 "Dog running."
- 🧒 "Yes! **The dog is running fast!**"

💡 Recasting lets children hear correct grammar while keeping the focus on **what they are trying to tell you**.



Meeting a New Schoolmate

Meeting someone new can feel awkward! Having a simple plan can make starting a conversation easier.

1. Introduce yourself.

Try:

- “Hey, I’m Jordan.”
- “Hi, I don’t think we’ve met. I’m Alex.”
- “Are you new here? I’m Sam.”

2. Ask an easy question.

Look for something you have in common:

- “I like your *(insert item here)*.”
- “Do you have Mr. Garcia for math too?”
- “What do you usually do at lunch?”
- “Are you into any sports or games?”

3. Build on their answer.

If they say, “**I play soccer,**” you might respond:

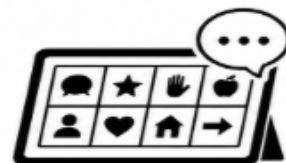
“**Cool! I play too. What position do you play?**”

Listen for something in their answer that can help **keep the conversation going**.

 **Remember:** You don’t need the perfect thing to say. Say hello, show interest, and listen. Not every introduction will become a friendship—and that’s okay. You can always say hello again another day!

AAC INSIGHT

— More Ways to Communicate —



Modeling Without Expectation

Children who use AAC need to **see other people use AAC**, just as speaking children need to hear other people talk.

Modeling without expectation means using your child's AAC system while you talk without making them copy you or press the same button.

👉 **For example:**

- 🍴 Tap **EAT** while saying, "Let's **eat!**"
- 🎮 Tap **TURN** and say, "My **turn!**"
- 🏃 Tap **GO** and say, "Ready... **GO!**"
- 🛑 Model **STOP**, **NO**, or **ALL DONE** when your child shows they want something to end.

💡 You don't need to model every word you say. Choose **one or two important words**, model them naturally, and keep the interaction going. AAC should be communication—not a quiz!



Difference vs. Disorder

Children who use two or more languages may communicate differently from children who use only one language. **That is normal!**

Bilingual children may:

- 🌐 Mix words from both languages.
- 🗣️ Be stronger in one language than another.
- 📖 Know some words in one language but not the other.
- 🏠 Use one language more at home and another at school.

For example, a child might say, "**Quiero the blue one.**" Using both languages in one sentence can be a normal and useful communication skill.

👉 A true language disorder affects a child's ability to **learn and use language across the languages they know**. SLPs use family input, observations, language samples, and other tools to help tell the difference.

💡 **Keep using your home language!** Talking, reading, singing, and playing in the language you know best helps your child build strong language skills.

AUTISM ADVOCACY AND ACCEPTANCE

— Understanding, Inclusion, and Respect —



Every Communicator Can Self-Advocate

Self-advocacy means communicating your wants, needs, preferences, and boundaries. This might mean saying, “*I need a break*,” selecting **STOP** on AAC, shaking your head, pointing, moving away, or using a picture or gesture.

Self-advocacy does not require speech.

👉 Adults can help build these skills by:

- 📱 **Modeling communication** such as **HELP, BREAK, STOP, NO, MORE, and ALL DONE.**
- 👁️ **Responding to all communication attempts**, including AAC, gestures, facial expressions, and body movements.
- 🙅 **Honoring “no” and “stop”** whenever possible so children learn that their communication matters.
- 🍏 **Offering choices** throughout the day.
- ⌚ **Giving enough time** to understand, respond, and communicate.
- 📅 **Supporting transitions** with visual schedules, timers, countdowns, and first/then supports.

💡 The goal isn't just following directions. We want children to learn that **their communication has power** and that the people around them will listen.

FLUENCY FOCUS

— Smooth, Confident Communication —



Stuttering & Participation

Stuttering can affect more than speech. Some children who stutter may feel nervous about **talking in class or with other people.**

They may hesitate to:

- 🙋 Raise their hand.
- 📖 Read aloud.
- 🤝 Meet someone new.
- ❓ Ask a question.
- 🎤 Give a presentation.

👉 Adults can help by giving children time to finish their thoughts. Avoid interrupting, finishing sentences or telling them to “*slow down*” or “*take a breath*.” Instead, keep natural eye contact and focus on **what they are saying**, not how fluently they say it.

Try responses like “**Tell me more!**”, “**That’s a great idea,**” or “**I’m listening.**”

💡 The goal isn’t perfect speech. It’s helping children become **confident communicators who know their ideas are worth hearing**.



[Fergal and the Bad Temper](#)

In [Fergal and the Bad Temper](#) by Robert Starling, a friendly young dragon named Fergal loses his temper and snorts dangerous fire whenever he is told what to do. After his fiery outbursts upset and create distance between him and his friends, his mother teaches him to count to ten, helping him learn healthy ways to calm down.

Below are some ideas of questions you can ask throughout the story. **You don’t need to ask them all!** Pick a couple you like, and answer them yourself if your child doesn’t seem to understand what you are doing. Ask them during the reading and after too, to help engage learning longer.



🧠 Expressive Language

Questions that help your child use words, describe, and explain.

- Tell me what happened here.

- How would you feel if you were Fergal?
- What could Fergal say instead of yelling?
- Can you think of another way Fergal could handle his anger?
- What would you tell Fergal?

Receptive Language

- Who is this story about?
- What happened first?
- What made Fergal upset?
- Where does Fergal go?
- What does Fergal do next?
- Who does Fergal meet?
- What happens when Fergal gets angry?
- What happens at the end?
- What was the problem in the story?

Inferencing & Pragmatic Language

- How can you tell Fergal is angry?
- Why do you think Fergal acted that way?
- How do you think the other characters feel when Fergal gets angry?
- What do you think Fergal is thinking?
- What might happen if Fergal keeps losing his temper?
- Why do you think someone helped Fergal?
- What could Fergal do to make things better?
- What would be a kind thing to say to someone who is angry?
- What would you do if your friend was acting like Fergal?
- How could Fergal tell someone he was upset without getting angry?

Good “Talk More” Follow-Ups

When your child gives a short answer, parents can keep the conversation going with:

- **“Why do you think that?”**
- **“Tell me more.”**
- **“How do you know?”**
- **“What makes you think that?”**
- **“What happened next?”**
- **“Can you give me an example?”**
- **“What could happen instead?”**
- **“What would you do?”**

A helpful approach is to **mix easier “right there” questions with a few thinking questions**. For example: “*What happened?*” → “*How did Fergal feel?*” → “*Why did he feel that way?*” → “*What could he do differently?*” This moves from comprehension to expressive language, inference, and problem-solving without making the reading feel like a test.



Community Announcement!

Save the Date! Tucson's Walk for Apraxia

We're excited to share this upcoming event for families in our community:

2026 Tucson Walk for Apraxia

 Riverfront Park; W. Lambert Lane, Oro Valley, AZ 85704

 October 31st, 2026

 Check in time: 9:30 AM | Walk event: 10:30 AM | Ceremony to follow

- Registration is **FREE** and open to everyone!
- Celebrate our Apraxia Stars 🌟
- Meet new friends and enjoy fun activities

What is Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)?

CAS is a rare motor speech disorder that makes it hard for children to plan and produce the movements needed for speech. While there is no cure, early and intensive therapy helps children build communication skills. Raising awareness is key—faster diagnoses mean earlier support and better outcomes.

👉 Register or learn more here: [Walk for Apraxia – Tucson](#)



If you have concerns about your child's speech, language, or other communication skills, we encourage you to reach out to the speech-language pathologist (SLP) at your child's school. Your school's SLP can answer questions, discuss your concerns, and help determine whether additional support and/or a speech-language evaluation may be appropriate.

Early communication between families and school staff is one of the best ways to ensure students receive the support they need to be successful. We are always happy to partner with families and work together to help every child become a confident communicator.



💡 Thank you for partnering with us on your child's communication journey. Each month, we'll share strategies, stories, and resources to support their growth at home and at school. Together, we can help every child find their voice!

We hope September is a month full of progress and growth in your child's communication skills. If you have any questions about anything in this newsletter, or would like another copy of the

August newsletter, please reach out to the speech-language pathologist at your child's school to learn more.

Stay tuned—our next newsletter will be heading your way in October!

Sincerely,
Your friendly campus speech-language pathologist