

The NHSLHA News

Want to be involved with professionals like yourself? Join NHSLHA! We hope you'll consider renewing your commitment to the New Hampshire Speech-Language-Hearing Association and help to make our small state more visible within the national community.

[Click to join or renew](#)

"We are tapping into what the world wants: to be a part of change. Now we have to channel that energy into purposeful action."

Noteworthy News for Continuing Education

The New Hampshire Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Spring 2016 Conference is scheduled for March 18, 2016 at the Concord Holiday Inn.

March 2016

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The New Hampshire Speech-Language-Hearing Association is holding a Spring Conference this year. Even more exciting is the dual-track offering, designed to meet the needs of both medical clinicians and pediatric clinicians working across treatment settings.

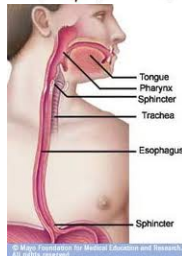


Please join us for comprehensive lectures and discussions:

Teaming up on Selective Mutism:

A relationship-based treatment model. CEUs = 0.6

Presenters: Annie DiVello, M.S., CCC-SLP, Sarah Josef, M.S., CCC-SLP, Elizabeth Doppler-Bourassa, Ph.D. and Erica Brown, OTR/L



Issues in Esophageal Dysphagia. CEUs = 0.6

Presenters: Joan Arsenault, M.A., CCC-SLP BCS/S, and Joan Baumer, MD

Please visit our website: <http://www.nhslha.org/professionals/continuing-education/>

Board Member Biography

Meet Jon Clancy, M.S., CCC-SLP, NHSLHA Treasurer

Jon Clancy, M.S., CCC-SLP has been a licensed speech-language pathologist for 18 years.



He has a particular interest in working with adolescents with language disorders. Jon was NHSLHA President from 2005 to 2007 and has recently returned to the NHSLHA Board to serve as Treasurer, after having served as Chair of the ASHA School Finance Committee. Jon has also been certified as a Certified Curriculum Director by the State of NH. Jon is presently employed by the Concord (NH)

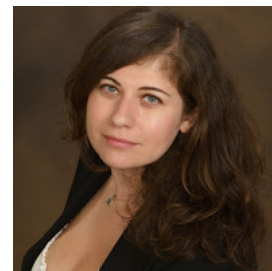
School District and the Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association. Past employers include the Hopkinton School District, Easter Seals, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, and the Hillsboro-Deering School District. In addition, Jon served as an adjunct professor in the Nashua Community College Speech Language Assistant program. Jon's undergraduate

degree from the UVM is in Russian and Eastern European Studies. He received his master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from UNH and has earned 60 credits towards a PhD in Educational Leadership at UMass.

Review of the Research

What “Their Social Skills Are Just Fine” Really Means When it Comes to Children with Language Impairment

by Tatyana Elleseff MA CCC-SLP



As a frequent participant in a variety of speech pathology forums I've read through countless “mini scenarios” of SLPs asking for advice regarding various aspects of therapy service provision for children with average IQ and language impairment (characterized by weaknesses in the area of listening comprehension, language processing, vocabulary acquisition, sentence formulation, as well as conversational development.)

When I ask the following question: “What about their social skills difficulties?” I invariably receive the following answer: “Their social skills are just fine!” When I ask: “How was their social competence assessed?” I am invariably told: “The teachers don't have any complaints, their eye contact is good, and they can keep up with conversations.”

As a result of seeing these and similar statements over and over again from a number of professionals I decided to write a blog post on this topic due to a certain degree of frustration on my part.

The first concept taught in typical language development classes in undergraduate programs is the fact that language is composed of three areas: **Content**, **Form**, and **Use**. Basically speaking, **Content** refers to conveying coherent and cohesive messages to others, **Form** refers to grammatically and syntactically correct expression of language, while **Use** refers to appropriate social pragmatic interactions with the public at large (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). In other words, these three areas are interconnected and difficulties will not be exclusively relegated to one area only.

This is further supported by research which indicates that children with language impairment (what many clinicians know as SLI or Specific Language Impairment) [are actually impaired in numerous aspects of language](#) including: phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.

Furthermore, research into language development and disorders has revealed that **there is no such category as expressive language disorder alone**. In other words, if there are expressive language deficits, you will most certainly find receptive language deficits if you look carefully enough. In his seminal article entitled: “**Is Expressive Language Disorder an Accurate Diagnostic Category?**” Laurence Leonard (2009) concluded that “[deficits in](#)



language expression are typically accompanied by limitations in language knowledge or difficulties processing language input”.

So now that we know that language deficits are diffuse and not isolated (e.g., impaired vocabulary/grammar only), let us discuss how social skills/social competence deficits fit into this picture.

One set of researchers who has been studying the construct of social skills in children with SLI for the past several decades are Bonnie Brinton and Martin Fujiki. In some of their earlier articles in the 90s they found evidence that children with SLI manifested pragmatic difficulties in conversational contexts with partners and were unable to adequately adjust to the needs of others in social interactions (Brinton, & Fujiki, 1993; Brinton & Fujiki, 1995; Brinton, Fujiki, & Powell, 1997; Fujiki & Brinton, 1994; Fujiki, Brinton & Todd 1996).

Later, Brinton’s and Fujiki’s work expanded beyond the pragmatic interactions to focus on the concept of social competence of children with language impairments. For those unfamiliar with this term, social competence is a complex, multidimensional concept composed of successful co-interaction of social, emotional, cognitive as well as behavioral factors, resulting in successful social adaptation (Semrud-Clikeman, 2007).

Brinton and Fujiki’s later studies found that children with language impairments were less accepted by peers, had poorer friendships, were perceived by teachers as being more withdrawn (as compared to peers) as well as presented with poor emotional competence and emotional intelligence (Brinton & Fujiki, 2012; Fujiki, Spackman, Brinton, & Illig, 2008; Spackman, Fujiki, Brinton, Nelson, & Allen, 2005).

Studies by other authors found that children with language impairments also present with impaired abstract emotion comprehension (Ford & Milosky, 2003).

In addition, researchers also found that the social competence of language-impaired children is affected from a very early age. To illustrate, Longobardi, Spataro, Frigerio & Rescorla, 2015, found that young children (2+ years of age) with delayed language development (who produced fewer than 50 words) exhibited lower social abilities, compared to age-matched peers.

What does this mean?

Research unequivocally indicates that children with language impairment or SLI, also present with concomitant social communication difficulties, which if left untreated will significantly adversely affect their academic outcomes as well as future life success. It is important to note that due to the varying the nature of social communication deficits ([internalizing versus externalizing manifestations](#)) many social communication deficits will be missed without the [administration of appropriate social pragmatic language assessments](#). It is also important to note that presently social pragmatic assessments ARE NOT routinely administered in numerous school settings as part of comprehensive language assessments.

Consequently, if a student presents with language impairment and the prevailing teacher/parental belief is that his/her social skills are “just fine”, it is important to support



this with relevant data based on comprehensive formal and informal battery of social communication assessments in order to justify the above statement with all due veracity.

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Biography:

Tatyana Elleseff MA CCC-SLP Tatyana Elleseff is a bilingual speech-language pathologist who specializes in working with multicultural, internationally and domestically adopted children as well as those with complex communication disorders. She received her MA from NYU, her Bilingual Extension Certification from Columbia University and 4 ACE awards for continuing education from ASHA (to date). Her articles have been published in several magazines including *Adoption Today*, *ASHA Perspectives SIG 16* and *17*, and *Advance for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists*. She has presented for a number of medical, academic and non-profit organizations including [Speechpathology.com](http://www.speechpathology.com), *Advance Magazine for Speech-Language Pathologists*, New Jersey Speech Language and Hearing Convention, American Academy of Pediatrics: Council on Foster Care, Adoption and Kinship, New Jersey Taskforce on Child Abuse and Neglect as well as North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC). For more information visit her blog <http://www.smartspeechtherapy.com/blog/> and online product store <http://www.smartspeechtherapy.com/shop/>

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