Speech Pathology

Visiting a speech pathologist: What to expect?

Knowing what to expect at an appointment can help you think about questions the speech pathologist might ask, what you are most concerned about, and preparing your child.

During the appointment

The speech pathologist will talk to you about your concerns and ask some questions about your child's history. Questions can include information about:

- Your child (e.g., what they like doing)
- Your main areas of concern
- Pregnancy and birth history
- Milestones such as crawling, walking, and first words
- Hearing assessments, infections or difficulties
- If your child had/has any difficulties eating or drinking
- Preschool and primary school education

The speech pathologist will complete assessments with your child. This can sometimes look like play. The speech pathologist actually will be looking at how your child communicates during familiar activities. Your child may be asked to say some words, or point to pictures. Some assessments can take longer, and may require another appointment to finish. The speech pathologist may also look at your child's lips, teeth, tongue and the back of their mouth.

What happens next?

Sometimes the speech pathologist is able to give you their recommendations during the first appointment, or they may need to look at the assessment results first. What happens next depends on the service and the needs of your child. Things that might happen include:

- Booking another appointment to complete the assessment/s or to talk about recommendations (results) or strategies to support your child's communication
- Suggesting referrals to other services such as a paediatrician assessment, a hearing test, or other health services
- Discussing therapy including waiting times, how much and what this involves, or if there are other services for your child
- Waiting or reviewing when your child is older

The above is generic advice and will depend on your child and the service you are attending. **Always ask questions if you are not sure.**