

The Effectiveness of Speech Therapy in the World for All Generations

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In elementary school, I remember seemingly random periods every Wednesday. No matter what we were doing, minus tests and stuff, I'd be taken out of the classroom and placed in a room with one teacher sitting adjacent of a long, rectangular table from me. The room was adorned with colors and filled with books, writing materials, and random other objects that would be used for activities.

This was the room where I'd spend an hour a day doing speech therapy. As a child, I always struggled with pronouncing certain consonants and vowels, making it hard to speak sometimes. I would sometimes stutter if I tried to say words with these language aspects I couldn't pronounce well.

One of the activities I remember doing was a memory match game where every time I flipped a card I'd have to say what object was on the card. I kept doing this until I matched every card. There was also coloring where I'd say what I'm drawing and make sentences about what it looks like is happening in the drawing.

My therapy teacher also had me listen to and repeat nursery rhymes. These were some of the ways I eventually pronounced my vowels and consonants mostly correctly and learned how to pair and say certain word stresses well. I did speech therapy from first until fifth grade when I stopped. I didn't need it anymore.

According to The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, every 1 in 12 children aged 3-17 has either voice, speech, or other language disorders throughout their school time. About 80-90% of these people with speech disorders go to therapy. If they go to school, then they will probably be monitored, and the school will be required to give them time with an Speech Language Pathology (SLP) teacher if necessary.

For the most part, SLP teachers are effective in school. Around 90% of students who have a speech disorder due to autism are typically treated to be able to speak properly. When it comes to people with normal speech disorders without any underlying cause, the effectiveness seems less as only 55-60% of them are treated but it's still more than half.

This change in effectiveness could be due to how different one kid's motivation with a speech disorder is to get rid of it, what activities the speech therapy teachers are doing, and how frequently they interact with their students for kids with autism and not.

Jesse Watts, a sophomore zoology major, said that he only briefly remembers his time in speech therapy, but he remembered how his teacher had him say lots of tongue

twisters, play the ISPY game, play Go Fish, and go over a word list related to the "sh" and "ch" sounds.

He mentioned that pairing "h" with other consonants was the most difficult thing for him when revolving his speech but those particular activities helped him a lot.

Noah Herrman, an anthropology major, reveals that while he still has some troubles with speech and stuttering, they are much less than they were before he got an SLP teacher from his school.

He mentioned how he didn't do speech therapy until middle school because that is when his school provided him with that opportunity. Instead of doing game activities, he did a lot of reading from books, which became increasingly harder as his speech improved.

Speaking of which, not every kid gets their speech problems resolved in elementary school. For some, it takes until middle or high school. For others, their problems aren't resolved at all, whether that be because the activities their SLP provided didn't work for them or because they were never given an SLP teacher at school and didn't do speech therapy outside of school in the first place.

While we focused on students with speech disorders, a fair share of adults also have them. According to The National Library of Medicine, around 17.6 million adults 18 or older (7.6%) report having voice problems for 12 months or more. This percentage is almost as much as the number of kids ages 3-17 with speech problems.

Some of these adults are people who have had speech problems as kids, but some may have just been diagnosed, amongst many other things.

Many similar activities with kids will work with adults, but it might take a little bit longer for them to process certain vowels, constants, or pairings of words and letters that they struggle with as when you get older the brain takes a longer time to comprehend languages.

Adults don't have the opportunity to get free therapy from schools, so they tend not to get rid of their disorder because they either do not have or want to pay for therapy, not knowing how effective it is. They also might feel embarrassed to do so. Around 70% of adults who do speech therapy have shown it positively affects their lives.

They have gotten rid of their speech disorder and have been able to live normal lives, able to communicate properly, etc.

Stephanie Couch, clinical lecturer of Speech Pathology said that 40% of adults who have known speech disorders will actively seek treatment while the others won't.

Many people have speech disorders, whether they were born with them or developed them later in life due to certain circumstances. No one should be embarrassed to look for help if they want to. Speech therapy has proved mostly helpful and in the same capacity for students and adults, so it is never too late to start today.

Speech Therapy Resources:

home-speech-home.com/speech-therapy-resources.html

speechandlanguagekids.com/free-speech-language-resources/