

Question: Is there a law that states if the therapy needs to be given in the student's native language or in their educational language?

Current law states that "in the case of a student with limited English proficiency, consider the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP." (IDEA '97 SEC.614). In other words, the speech therapy services should be developed to enable the CLD student to receive an educational benefit. (See court case Fernando P. v. Pasadena Independent School District, 1991, Fernando P. v. Pasadena ISD TEA Docket No. 366-SE-072 January 2003). It should be the ARD committee's decision as to the language of speech

therapy services, but the SLP should make an informed recommendation based on assessment results. It must be a case by case decision. Much depends on the child's proficiency in his native language, proficiency in English, and his language of instruction. Langdon & Saenz (1996) state that services should be provided in the stronger language. Information on language dominance and proficiency obtained during the assessment will be necessary to determine language of service delivery. In cases where no clear dominance can be determined, serious consideration should be given to providing services in the home language. This will promote the development of very important first language skills and facilitate family involvement as well. Research has demonstrated that new skills learned in the first language typically transfer to the second language (English).

ASHA (1985) addresses this issue of provision of services to minority language speakers with communication disorders. Depending on the client's English language proficiency, recommended competencies vary for the SLP.

Resources

ASHA (1985). "*Clinical Management of Communicatively Handicapped Minority Language Populations.*" Position Statement. ASHA, 27.

Langdon, H.W. & Saenz, T.I (1996) **Language Assessment and Intervention with Multicultural Students**, Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates.