What is the difference between speech and language?  Isn’t it all just communicating?

Now bear with me because most of what I am going to share is pretty cut and dry, however, it is extremely important!  Most people use the words**speech** and **language**interchangeably or think that they mean the same thing.

**Speech** is not only a physical process, but also how we verbally communicate.  Speech consists of how sounds are made (*articulation*), how we breathe air through the vocal folds to produce sound (*voice*), and the flow or rhythm of speaking (fluency).

When a child has difficulty with articulation, voice or fluency then we would say that the child has a SPEECH disorder.

**Language** is the system for communicating thoughts, feelings, and ideas either spoken or written.  Language is a rule-governed system.  It has three specific functions: form, function and use.  The [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/language_speech.htm)) (ASHA) states that language consists of meanings of words, how to create new words, how to put words in the correct order, and when to use them.  Language can be divided into two areas: receptive and expressive language. *Receptive language* refers to the comprehension of language whether it is spoken or written.  *Expressive language* refers to how a person communicates their wants or needs.

When a child has difficulty with semantics, morphology, grammar/syntax, or pragmatic language then we would say that the child has a LANGUAGE disorder.

So to sum it up, **Speech** and **Language** are the not the same.  They are very different and together they do create communication.**Communication**is how we receive, send, process, and comprehend messages.  Communication can be verbal, non-verbal or written.  For example, babies use non-verbal communication by using different cries to let us know that they are hungry, tired, or wet.  **Communication** is the fancy word under which **speech, language** and/or **hearing** abilities fall.

As a parent, it can often be hard to determine if your child has a [delay](http://www.teachspeechtherapy.com/red-flags/), what type of delay your child may have, and if they have a delay, how severe is it?  Speech and language disorders can range from mild to severe and may occur together or individually.  The one thing I tell parents, if they have a concern regarding their child, is to be proactive. Please don’t “wait and see,” seek a screening and/or a full comprehensive evaluation by a certified speech-language pathologist.

Retrieved from: http://www.teachspeechtherapy.com/speech-therapy/1689/