

Speech pathology services are in significant demand, the public system cannot handle the current demand for services. I have several families who I have seen who have been waiting 2 to 3 years for an assessment, which is terrible.

When I have previously assessed children as a speech pathologist, the guidelines for assessing children requires that they be labelled as "mild, moderate, severe" in their areas of delay in their communication areas. These eligibility criteria classing the child's delay were incorrect, and not what I would label the child as clinically. For example, in the eligibility criteria a lateral lisp was classed under the "mild" pathway according the public guidelines. This meant the child would be eligible for a maximum of 3 sessions followed by discharge from speech pathology services. In my professional opinion as a qualified speech pathologist, a lateral lisp is what is classed as a severe speech sound disorder which does not typically occur in a child's speech development. Furthermore, this disorder generally requires 6 to 12 months of regular therapy to resolve. Children are not getting the services they require through the current speech pathology services.