

Mission Statement of SLCD

The School for Language and Communication Development is a publicly funded special education school which is chartered by the Board of Regents and approved by the New York State Education Department. Since 1985, SLCD has provided an innovative language-based education for children with special needs. Our educational philosophy is predicated on the understanding that a child's language disorder needs to be addressed early. A language disorder, left untreated, can translate into serious learning and academic deficits during the school-age years. Because language learning provides the foundation for all educational development, language is, in essence, the prerequisite program for academic achievement and growth. The language disordered student must be identified as early as possible to address his language learning problems before they become instructional deficits. SLCD uses a transdisciplinary general education curriculum which is language enriched and integrated through all therapeutic services. SLCD is committed to helping students from their early years on through high school.

At SLCD, our mission is to identify children with language and communication disorders early and provide educational programs which will prepare them for a world filled with words, sentences, stories and messages. Language is a symbol system; it provides the means to reach out to the world. It is the most important skill that a child must learn early in life. Language provides the foundation for socializing, reading, questioning, writing and thinking.

SLCD has developed language-based programs which are designed to stimulate and challenge children. Our philosophy is "language is everything and everywhere," so our children need to be *immersed* in language activities to learn. We try different methodologies to teach a child – to reach a child – every child.

SLCD's transdisciplinary curriculum focuses on the integration of language using different modalities and a variety of instructional techniques. We target the following domain areas: cognitive, pragmatic, semantic, phonological, social and academic. For children attending our school-age program, there is an additional domain area: literacy-based core academic instruction. The school-age curriculum meets the New York State Learning Standards.

Every student should learn to express his needs and his feelings. Very often children with emotional-behavioral problems have underlying language disorders. Research indicated that almost 65% of the children identified in school with social learning deficits have language disorders which have not been diagnosed. We believe that as language skills increase, social and behavioral problems decrease. It is also important to understand that children's cognitive abilities (IQ scores) can only be indirectly assessed on an IQ test. The verbal part of the IQ test is really a measure of language ability. We believe that as children's language skill increase, their cognitive abilities increase as well.

Language is a tool for all learning which most people take for granted. However, there are some children who struggle to acquire language skills. SLCD's motto is: "Silence is not golden." We are here to help each student find his voice. SLCD's curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of our students at different stages of their lives. We are committed to preparing our students long term to meet the challenges of independent learning and accomplishment.

SLCD is also committed to increasing public awareness about the unique needs of these children, since they are often misdiagnosed and misplaced in educational programs.