

**Title**

Service in Serbia for children with language impairment

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In Serbia, the primary language impairment is usually called developmental dysphasia, but the term specific language impairment (SLI) is also becoming more common. Services for children with language impairment are provided in Serbia at three levels: public health system, public education, and the private sector.

Public preschools and schools are involved in initial recognition of children with LI. Suspected children are sent to the pediatrician at the local public health centers where an initial inspection is made and if LI is suspected, the child is sent further to specialized institutions where more detailed diagnostics is provided. It usually involves speech therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, pediatrician, neurologist, and audiologist. Treatment is individually organized in the institution, twice a week, and usually lasts about two or three years. It is provided exclusively by speech therapists who try to involve the parents in the process.

All children in Serbia have public health insurance that covers all the expenses of diagnostics and treatment in public service. Private service is developing intensively, but it is not integrated into the public system yet, so the costs are covered by parents or private insurance.

Two main problems in the system are the lack of professional standardized instruments for language development assessment and the geographical distribution of institutions that provide service - since located in the large cities, they are remote from children in need in many parts of the country.