

# Case Study:

## School-Based Interprofessional Team Assesses Student with ADHD and Developmental Language Disorder to Improve Literacy Outcomes

### Summary

Morgan is a third-grade student with developmental language disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Morgan is currently on medication for ADHD and receives services for language through an individualized education program (IEP). A team of professionals at Morgan's school created a plan focused on improving literacy, language, and executive functioning skills over the course of the school year.

### Student Info



**MORGAN**  
EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

### Current Diagnosis:

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and developmental language disorder (DLD)

### Meet The Team



School Psychologist



General Education Teacher



Special Education Teacher



Student's Family



School Administrator



School-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)



School Reading Specialist



Student

Continue for more



## Background

When the interprofessional practice (IPP) team was assembled, Morgan was a third-grade student in the general education environment with services and supports given through an individualized education program (IEP). Family reported that Morgan had no concerns with hearing, articulation, or social skills. English is spoken at home. They reported Morgan was diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and began medication last school year to improve focus and reduce impulsivity in the school environment.

Morgan received intervention for language by a speech-language pathologist (SLP) in school 40 minutes per week through an IEP due to a diagnosis of developmental language disorder (DLD) at age 6. She also participated in Tier 3 Reading Intervention via a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model to address concerns with reading raised by the general education teacher. Family reported some concerns with (a) progress in reading skills and (b) feedback on the most recent report card. Parents were concerned that Morgan may need more direct support with reading skills and wanted to make sure that the diagnosis of ADHD was not impacting academic skills.

The IPP team assembled included the members of the IEP team, the MTSS specialist, and the school psychologist recognizing that Morgan's case required joint communication and planning.

## How They Collaborated

The IPP team met to review information on Morgan's current progress in (a) speech-language interventions, (b) MTSS reading interventions, (c) standardized assessment data, and (d) the general education curriculum. The team determined additional areas of assessment that were needed to support Morgan's academic needs.

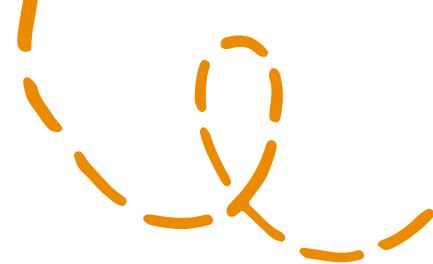
The SLP reevaluated language and literacy skills—including phonological awareness, understanding and use of vocabulary and grammar, and language comprehension. Morgan's results fell below those of their peers in grammar, syntax, and phonological awareness. Average or above-average scores on expressive and receptive vocabulary, vocal quality, fluency of speech, articulation, and hearing. The school psychologist and the SLP completed an in-class observation to examine Morgan's skills in the classroom environment and determine the impact of ADHD symptoms and DLD in the classroom. Both the SLP and school psychologist noted Morgan's time on task was below peers during independent reading time in class but improved during an observed math time. Both professionals noted similarities to teacher reports regarding needing additional prompts for directions and support getting started on tasks.

The reading specialist provided progress monitoring data from interventions—including word reading, oral reading fluency, and pseudoword decoding. Progress monitoring data was used to assess growth in these areas across Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention services. There was not substantial improvement noted in progress monitoring data around the timeframe when medication for ADHD symptoms began.

The school psychologist began by reviewing existing data from Morgan's academic history, including previous intervention data and universal screening measures to determine performance growth. The school psychologist gathered information from key team members to understand functioning in the classroom and in areas of need, and coordinated who would assess each area identified. The school psychologist coordinated with the IPP team including Morgan's family about follow-up testing including:

- rating scales to examine impact of attention (Behavior Assessment Scale for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3); Conners 4)

Continue for more 



## How They Collaborated cont.

- academic achievement measures (Weschler Individual Achievement Test, Fourth Edition (WIAT-IV word reading, pseudoword decoding, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension); Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, Second Edition (CTOPP-2 phonological memory and rapid automatized naming).

Formal testing found that ADHD symptoms were in the borderline clinically significant range in the home environment and clinically significant range in the school environments for inattentive symptoms, though hyperactivity and impulsivity were falling in the average range for their age while medication.

Academic testing identified significant needs in rapid automatized naming, pseudoword decoding, oral reading fluency, and low average skills in reading comprehension.

Information gathered on reading interventions was below grade level norms performance gap widening in Tier 3 (more intensive) services and while on medication.

The general education teacher provided information on progress in class. The teacher reported difficulty following multi-step directions, focusing on class, communicating effectively with peers, initiating tasks, and working to task completion. Since starting the medication, the school has noticed improvements in movement and impulsivity. Morgan reports wanting to do well and when engaged in a manageable task, Morgan engages to meet classroom expectations.

The family reported that Morgan often guesses when reading, difficulty memorizing sight words, and with spelling homework. In general, the family reports that Morgan spends significant time completing their homework because of frustration and a lack of focus.

After reviewing the evaluation results, the IPP team recommended that Morgan receive special education services of direct reading and language through an individualized education program (IEP). Once the IEP was finalized, Morgan began meeting with:

- a classroom aid to address initiating tasks and working to task completion
- a special education teacher to address reading fluency and comprehension
- the school-based SLP to identify and implement strategies syntax and grammar

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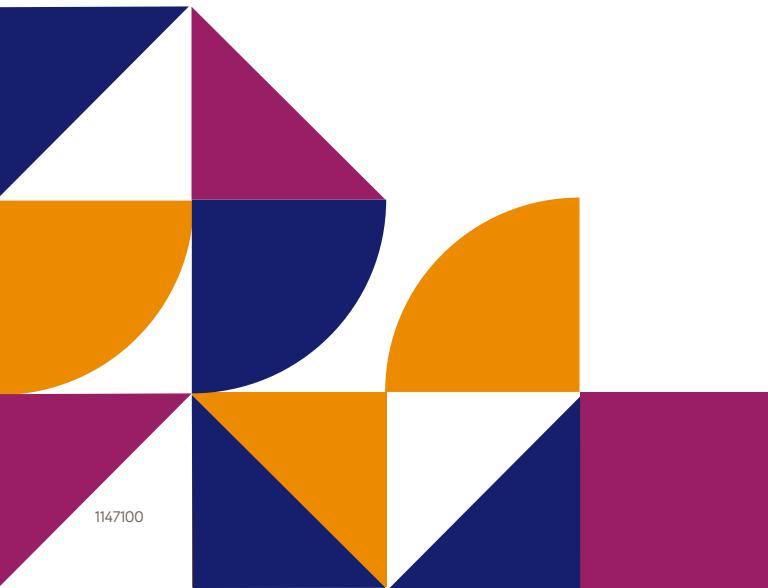


## Outcome

The school-based SLP and the special education teacher work closely together to identify and use the same or similar reading materials in their sessions—to target Morgan's reading fluency and comprehension. They regularly share progress toward IEP goals with each other and with the larger team. The classroom aid supporting executive functioning skills shares progress with the special education teacher and the SLP to work on initiating tasks. Data shows that Morgan is making steady progress toward literacy and language goals and is beginning to apply skills in the classroom and at home.

## On-Going Collaboration

The IPP team sends, at minimum, monthly emails among team members and Morgan's family. Progress and data is reported every 9 weeks along with report cards. In monthly communications, the team and the family share what is working and what needs adjustment. The IPP team checks in regularly with the special education teacher who serves as the case manager to ensure making progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives.



# Case Rubric:

## School-Based Interprofessional Team Assesses Student with ADHD and Developmental Language Disorder to Improve Literacy Outcomes

### Student Info



**MORGAN**  
EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

#### Current Diagnosis:

Attention-deficit/  
hyperactivity disorder  
(ADHD) and developmental  
language disorder (DLD)

### Meet The Team



School  
Psychologist



General  
Education  
Teacher



Special  
Education  
Teacher



Student's  
Family



School  
Administrator



School-based  
Speech-Language  
Pathologist (SLP)



School Reading  
Specialist



Student

### History and Concerns

(Share key information  
gathered from team)

Third-grader Morgan has developmental language disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Morgan is currently on medication for ADHD and receives services for language through an individualized education program (IEP). Family reported some concerns with (a) progress in reading skills and (b) feedback on the most recent report card.

Continue for more 

## Case Rubric continued

### Assessment Plan

(Discuss, reflect, and modify recommendations to develop a coordinated plan)

The team recognized that Morgan's case required joint communication and collaboration with the individualized education program (IEP) team. Both teams needed to successfully and effectively share relevant information. Team members concurred about the importance of mutual trust, respect, and support within and across teams.

**The IPP team met to discuss and finalize the areas of assessment and mutually agreed on their roles in assessment:**



**Student's Family:** Report on strengths and concerns; participate in developing goals and plans for Morgan's communication and executive functioning skills; request information about community resources.



**Student:** Share thoughts and opinions on academic skills, strengths, goals, and needs.



**School-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):** Assess speech and language skills in the academic setting.



**General Education Teachers:** Share informal and formal data on performance in the classroom setting and in specific academic subjects.



**Special Education Teacher:** Provide information on types of supportive special educational programs and resources.



**School Psychologist:** Assess academic achievement, behavior rating scales and provide interpretation of data.



**School Reading Specialist or MTSS Provider:** Conduct MTSS reading assessments to determine strengths and areas of need in decoding, reading fluency, encoding, and reading comprehension skills.



**Other Teachers and School Staff (as appropriate):** Share feedback on performance in art, music, and physical education (P.E.), skills in the school cafeteria, and in other school environments.



**School Administrator:** Guide family and team in making determinations for special education services and supports.

Continue for more 

## Case Rubric continued

### Assessment Results

(After assessing Morgan, three IPP team member shared their findings)



#### **School-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):**

Conducted comprehensive speech, language, and auditory skill assessments—including phonological awareness skills, understanding and use of vocabulary and grammar skills, language and reading comprehension. Assessments showed that some language skills were within the average range, and others were below average like grammar, syntax, and phonological awareness.

Other skills continued to be age-appropriate like expressive and receptive vocabulary, vocal quality, fluency of speech, articulation, receptive language, and hearing. Based on the results of the evaluation and school district eligibility for special education guidelines, Morgan continued to qualify for direct speech-language services.



**School Reading Specialist:** Performed informal and formal assessments of Morgan's reading decoding skills, including (a) accuracy reading real and nonsense words; (b) reading fluency skills, including their rate and accuracy reading words, sentences, and passages; and (c) reading comprehension skills—such as the ability to answer factual and inferential questions about short passages that they had read.



**School Psychologist:** Assessments confirmed ADHD symptoms were in the borderline clinically significant range in the home environment and clinically significant range in the school environments for inattentive symptoms. Hyperactivity and impulsiveness were falling in the average range with medication intervention. Academic testing identified needs in rapid automatized naming, pseudoword decoding, oral reading fluency, and low average skills in reading comprehension.

[Continue for more](#) 

## Case Rubric continued

<p><b>IPP Treatment Plan</b> (Discuss, reflect, and modify recommendations to develop a coordinated plan)</p>	<p><b>School-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):</b> Because Morgan continued to qualify for an individualized education program (IEP), the SLP meets with Morgan one time a week for 30 minutes in a group and one 30-minute session in the general education classroom. In the small group session, Morgan works on identifying details in oral and written content from the curriculum and identifying strategies to use in the classroom environment.</p> <p>The SLP meets once a week with the special education teacher and general education teacher to discuss strategies that are working as well as sharing data on progress monitoring.</p> <p><b>Special Education Teacher:</b> Morgan qualified for additional services in the IEP to continue working on reading comprehension and fluency skills. The special education teacher pushes into the general education classroom during literacy instruction. At times, Morgan will be pulled out to practice specific skills or strategies and for assessments. The classroom aid, under the direction of the special education teacher, assists Morgan with executive function skills during literacy and math, helping them stay on task and scaffold strategies to build independence.</p>
<p><b>Treatment Outcomes</b> (Discuss results of treatment)</p>	<p>Progress monitoring reports from speech-language therapy sessions; results of reading instruction and curriculum-based assessments; quarterly IEP progress monitoring reports show that Morgan's language skills, reading comprehension, reading fluency, and executive functioning skills show growth. Morgan needs fewer reminders to get started on a classroom assignment.</p>

Continue for more 

## Case Rubric continued

<b>Ongoing Collaboration</b>	<p>The IPP team sends minimum monthly emails including the school psychologist, and Morgan's family to coordinate ongoing services and community resources. The IPP team checks in with the case manager, Morgan's special education teacher, to make sure there is progress toward meeting goals and objectives.</p>
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## Acknowledgments

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ASHA extends its gratitude to the subject-matter expert(s) who were involved in the development of the original version of this IPP case:

- Lauren Arner, MA, CCC-SLP
- Brittany Bice Urbach, PhD

## Citations

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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). *School-Based Interprofessional Team Assesses Student with ADHD and Developmental Language Disorder to Improve Literacy Outcomes* [www.asha.org/practice/ipe-ipp/case-studies/case-study-27/](http://www.asha.org/practice/ipe-ipp/case-studies/case-study-27/).

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