



## Understanding Evaluation Terminology

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The evaluation process can be daunting. It's often full of new information that is confusing and overwhelming. Many speech-language pathologists and teachers use unfamiliar terms when sharing evaluation results with parents. This explanation of frequently used terms listed below may help you understand the vocabulary often used in speech-language evaluation reports.



### Frequently Used Terms:

**Speech** – a verbal means of communicating that includes:

*Articulation* – how speech sounds are made. (Children must learn to how to produce the “r” sound in order to say “rabbit” instead of “wabbit.”)

*Voice* – using the vocal folds and breathing to produce sound. Voice is often described by its quality – hoarseness or loss of voice.

*Fluency* – the rhythm of speech. Hesitations or stuttering can affect fluency.

**Language** – socially shared rules involving receptive, expressive, and pragmatic skills:

*Receptive language* – ability to understand spoken words (following directions, listening to and understanding a story, grouping items by category).

*Expressive language* – ability to verbally express thoughts and ideas (answering questions, telling a story, describing an item).

*Pragmatics* – ability to use language in specific situations (greeting an unfamiliar person, using and understanding humor, taking turns) and having an understanding of social rules.

**Standardized Tests** – tests administered in a consistent or standard manner with the same questions, administration, and scoring procedures for all test-takers.

**Standard Score** – a score based on a scale with an average score or mean of 100. A standard score allows the comparison of a student's performance across different tests and/or between peers. (For most assessments, 85-115 is the average range.)

**Percentile Rank** – compares a student’s standard score with that of other students his/her age or grade. (A percentile ranking of 75 indicates that 75% of the students who took the same standardized test received the same score or lower.)

**Descriptive Classification or Category** – describes a student’s performance compared with same-age peers (Below Average, Average, Above Average, etc.).

**Standard Deviation** – how spread out the numbers or values are in a set of data. It tells how far a student’s standard score is from the average or mean. The closer the standard score is to the average, the smaller the standard deviation.

**Stanine** – measures a student’s performance based on an equal interval scale of 1 to 9. (A Stanine of 5 is average.)

**Grade Equivalent** – compares a student’s performance to a school grade equivalent. (A grade equivalent of 1.5 indicates the student’s performance is at the 5th month of 1st grade)

**Age Equivalent** – compares a student’s performance to a chronological age.

\*This information and the bell curve that follows is intended to provide you with an understanding of terminology frequently used in standardized testing and should not be used to interpret the results of speech-language assessments. Only a certified speech-language pathologist can interpret speech-language evaluations. To find a certified speech-language pathologist in your area, please visit [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) .

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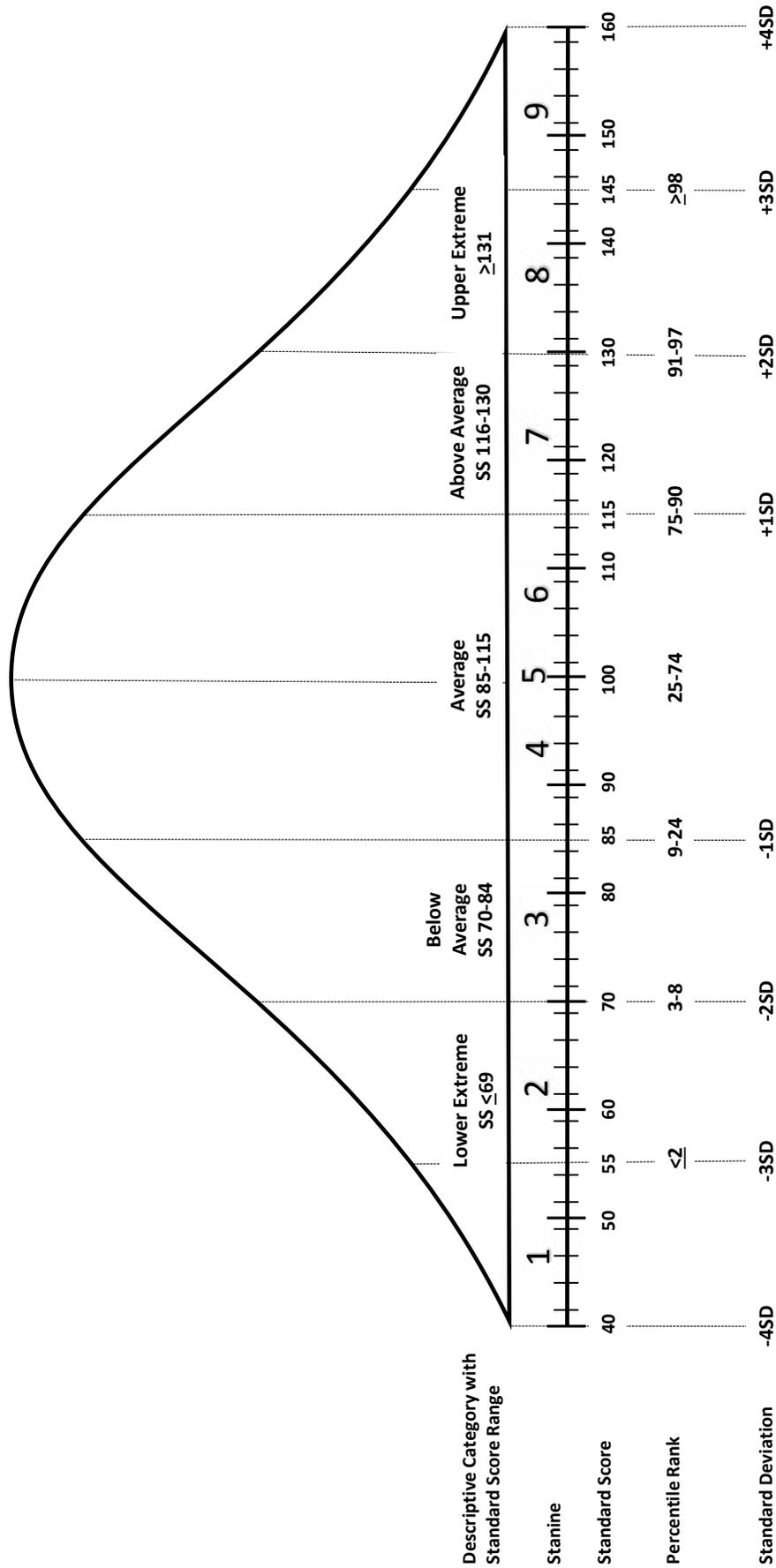
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Test administrators often use the following bell curve to provide a visual reference of evaluation results.



\*\*Speech Language Pathologists; Use this bell curve to mark student scores.