

Speech, Language and Learning Services

2024 Program Evaluation Report

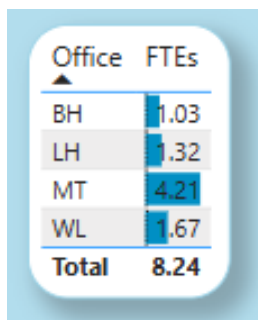
Executive Summary

This was another successful year for Speech, Language, and Learning Services. One of the department's biggest accomplishments was a successful move in July from Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center's (CHSC's) University Circle location to CHSC's new office in Midtown. One of the goals for this move was to increase accessibility for high-need clients, and both existing and new clients have responded positively to our new location. The department continued to provide safety-net services for clients on Medicaid, who struggle with accessibility to services. Project ELLA (Early Language and Literacy for All), our grant-funded public health program for children age birth to 5 continued its success, providing expanded free services in both the clinic and in the community. The number of students served at our contract locations, including charter schools and Head Starts, increased this year as well. Through clinical care, public health programming, and school-based partnerships, the team continued to meet families where they are, with compassion, evidence-based practice, and a deep commitment to equity. The department is proud of the difference we are making and looks forward to making an even greater impact in 2025.

In-Clinic Services

Staffing

CHSC ended 2024 with a speech-language pathology (SLP) staff of 10, for a total of 8.24 FTEs.



BH: Broadview Heights

LH: Lyndhurst

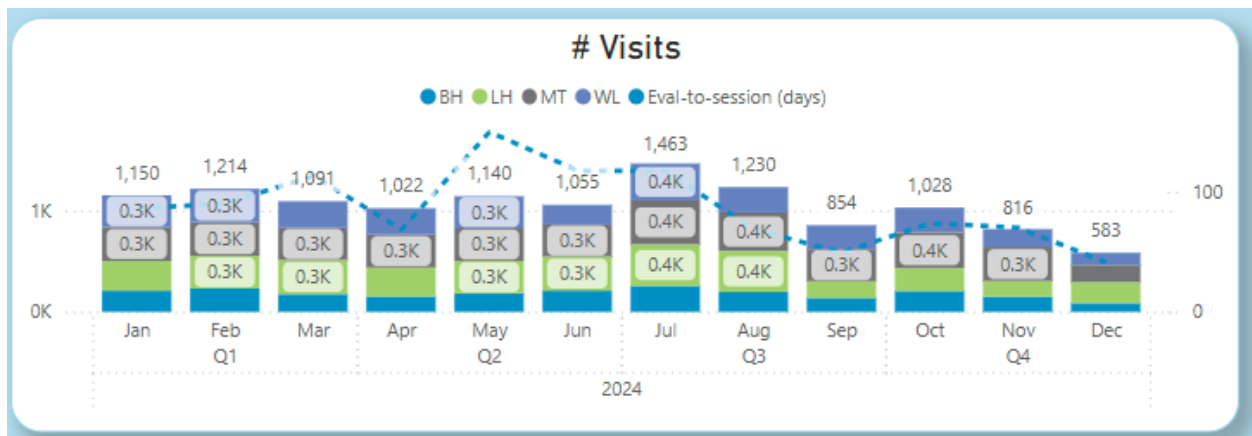
MT: University Circle/Midtown

WL: Westlake

Analysis: With 8.24 FTE, we still have a significant waitlist, especially during evening times. We are looking to add 3.0 FTE in 2025, targeted mostly toward using our Midtown office to capacity. Most of our waitlist is for evening times, so a part-time evening-only SLP position will be posted.

Visits

Across our 4 office locations, CHSC served 628 unique clients for a total of 8,364 visits. University Circle/Midtown continued to be our busiest location, followed by Lyndhurst, Westlake, and Broadview Heights. The visit numbers track with staffing at each location. CHSC continued its safety-net status, with 47% of our clients insured by Medicaid. Because of poor reimbursement rates, many clinics do not see Medicaid clients.



Office	# Visits	# Clients
BH	1100	74
LH	747	127
MT	3928	316
WL	1661	111
Total	8436	628

Analysis: The team completed a significant number of visits, but we are not using all offices to capacity. Staffing shortage and clinic hours (i.e., lack of late-night client care coordinator coverage on some days) are two obstacles to operating at full capacity. In 2025, we will make strategic staffing changes to add time to offices that have late nights and move part-time clinicians to offices on days that do not have late nights.

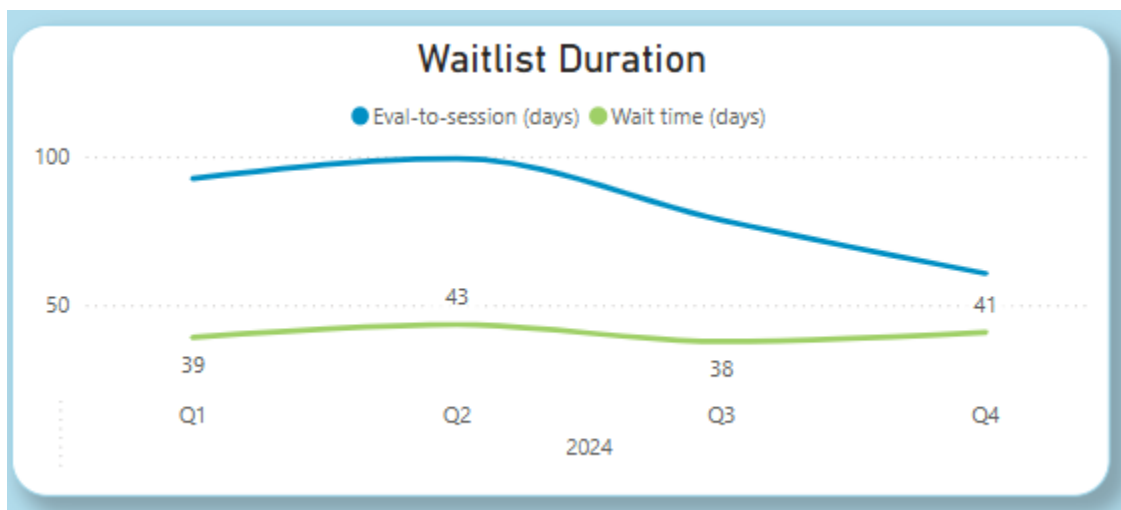
No-Shows and Cancellations

Across yearly quarters, no-shows ranged from a low of 5.2% in Q4 to a high of 7.1% in Q3. Cancels (client and clinic combined) ranged from a high of 39% in Q4 (mainly due to the holidays and a week-long all-CHSC closure) to a low of 29% in Q1.

Analysis: To address these numbers, the department is asking clinicians to better enforce the attendance policy and also considering how to make CHSC more accessible to clients who often cancel or no-show through initiatives like a walk-in clinic.

Waitlist

In the second quarter of 2024, many clients were waiting almost 100 days from the time of their evaluation to their first treatment session. The department made changes to the evaluation scheduling and was able to bring the time on the waitlist down to 60 days by the end of 2024.

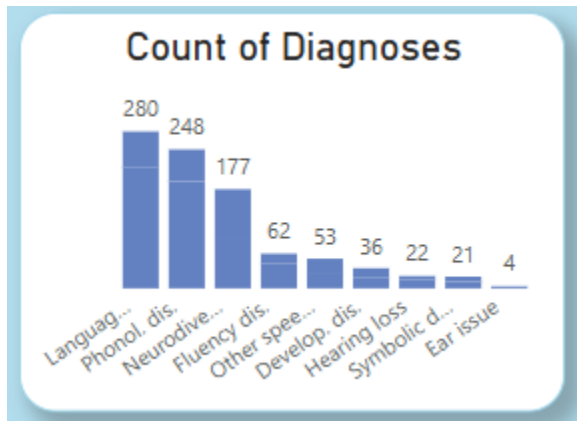


Analysis: The changes to the evaluation schedule were very effective at reducing wait times. Adding more FTE will also help to decrease wait time.

Clients

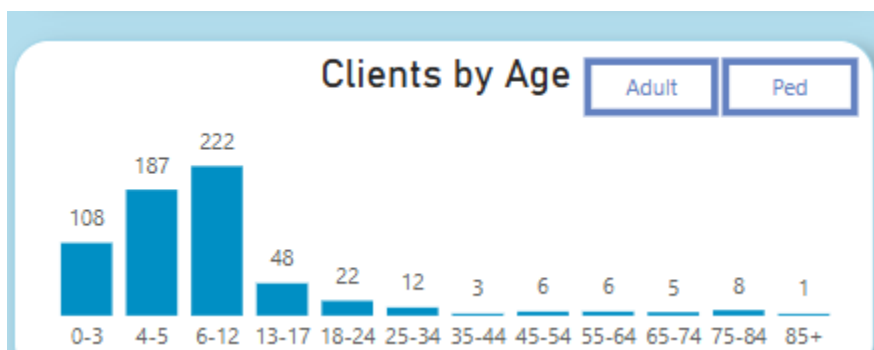
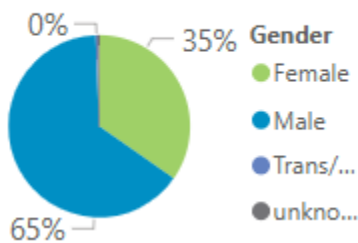
Diagnoses

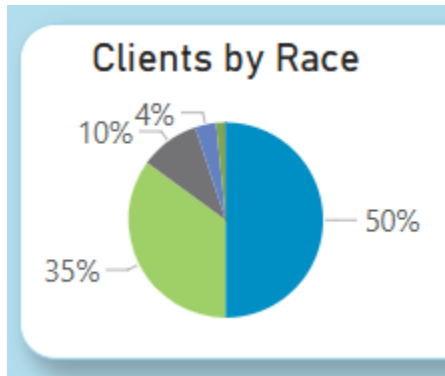
The most common diagnoses of our clients include language disorders, speech sound disorders, and autism.



Demographics

Clients by Gender





Blue: Black

Green: White

Purple: Biracial

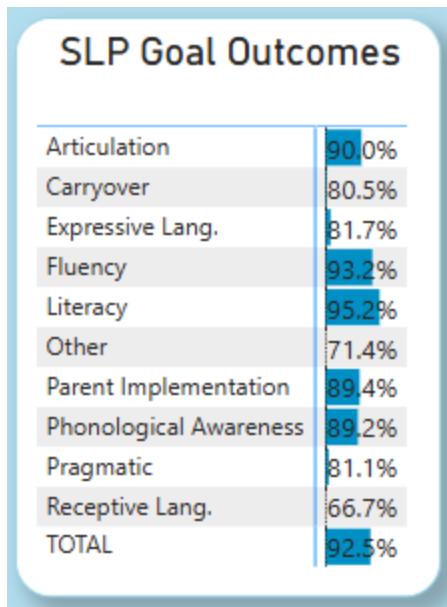
Dark Green: Asian

Gray: Information not provided

Analysis: The gender demographics are as expected, as boys are more likely than girls to have a communication disorder. For age, we are underserving the adult population. This is an area for growth going forward. For race, it's important to note that even though half of our clients are Black, the SLP team is entirely white. We have hired a Black SLP who will start in 2025 to help address the demographic disparity.

Progress on Goals

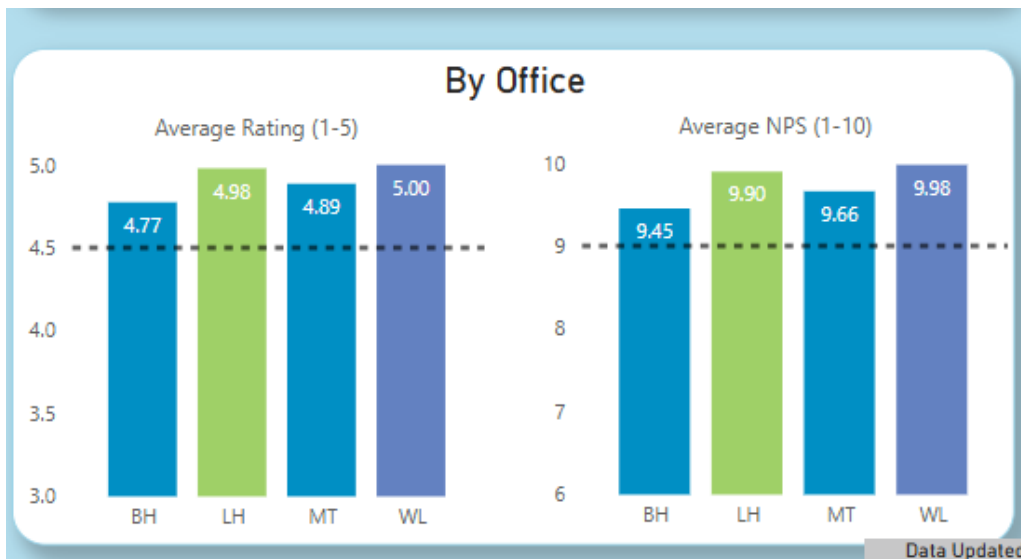
93% of clients met or made significant progress on their goals, surpassing our benchmark of 85%.



Analysis: As a whole, SLPs are writing appropriate goals for their clients and providing solid services to help their clients meet those goals. Receptive language goals will be discussed with the team to better understand the low percentage of success.

Client Feedback

CHSC sources feedback from our clients through GatherUp. Clients receive an email that prompts them to rate our services out of 5 stars and rate from 1 – 10 how likely they are to recommend our services to others. CHSC received very high marks in both areas across all locations, surpassing our benchmarks.



Analysis: CHSC clients are very happy with their speech and language services as a whole, and the department surpassed its benchmarks.

Contract Services

Charter Schools & Head Start

Historically at CHSC, all SLPs worked year-round and provided services at both schools and in the clinic. This led to a time consuming yearly scramble to get school SLPs clients when the schools were out for the summer. In 2023, the school team and the clinic team were divided into two separate groups. School SLPs now work a school schedule and do

not spend any time in the clinic. This solved the summer scramble and SLPs reacted positively to the change.

CHSC continued to provide services in 5 Breakthrough Public Schools and 3 Intergenerational Schools. A team of 6 SLPs served 1,573 students. We also continued to provide services at Lake Geauga United Head Starts, where we served 729 students through screenings, evaluations, and treatment. We also continued our presence at Catholic Charities Head Starts, where we served 434 students through screenings, evaluations, and treatment.

Analysis: The clinic/school team split was very successful. We are providing the maximum hours possible at the contract sites; however, we do see a few thousand dollars in potential revenue loss due to sick days when we cannot bill. Going forward, we will build expected sick days into the budget.

Project ELLA (Early Language and Literacy for All)

For Project ELLA, 2024 was a year of strategic growth, expanded community engagement, and improved service delivery.

At our University Circle and then Midtown location, 191 clients received no-cost speech and language services, for a total of 2,133 client visits and 1,185 service hours. 71% of clients served were Black and 17% were white. 69% of clients served were male. 92% of these clients met or made significant progress on their goals, surpassing our benchmark of 90%.

An important part of these services is empowering caregivers to support their children's language development at home. Through structured parent engagement strategies, 90% of caregivers reported actively practicing speech-language techniques beyond therapy sessions, reinforcing long-term outcomes for children. Our goal for the year was to serve 225 unique clients in-clinic, but the disruption of relocation of the University Circle Office to Midtown and staffing constraints caused us to miss this goal.

To strengthen early intervention efforts, community-based screenings were ramped up, from 73 in 2023 to 202 in 2024—a 177% increase. This initiative significantly improved early identification of speech-language delays and ensured prompt referrals for free therapy services. I also led outreach efforts that grew Project ELLA's active program partnerships to 36 organizations, including Starting Point, The Centers, and The Literacy Cooperative—critical stakeholders in early childhood education and literacy. In 2024, there were 27 community events, reaching 997 participants, including caregivers, educators, and

healthcare providers. Project ELLA's "Catch and Pass!" public health messaging continued to gain traction, reinforcing the importance of early language exposure within the community. These initiatives helped increase awareness of the importance of early speech and language development, contributing to a 23% rise in referrals for children aged 0-5.

Project ELLA received the prestigious Early Childhood Innovation Award from Cuyahoga County's Invest in Children initiative, an acknowledgment of our impactful public health approach to early intervention. This recognition has strengthened community trust and further positioned Project ELLA as a model for early childhood language and literacy services. Overall, in 2024, Project ELLA has expanded access, improved efficiency, and deepened community impact, ensuring that more children received the early language support they need for lifelong success.

Analysis: A challenge of this year was getting the children who were identified as at risk for a language disorder in for services at our Midtown location. In 2025, we will pilot providing services on-site in underserved childcare centers. We will also focus on having a more consistent presence in the communities we wish to serve.