

Introduction

HELP for Middle School was written to help speech-language clinicians and teachers meet the unique challenges presented by middle school-aged students with language disorders. While the language skills of these students may be commensurate with those of students in elementary school, many of the elementary-level materials for language development aren't suitable for students in middle school. The skills targeted by elementary level materials may be appropriate, but the look and tone of many of them are obviously geared toward younger students. Therefore, a primary goal in the development of *HELP for Middle School* is to target the skills students with language disorders continue to struggle with in a format that is compatible with the language needs of middle school students yet reflective of their interests and chronological ages.

The four main skill areas represented in this volume — Vocabulary, Grammar, Question Comprehension, and Following Directions — were chosen to provide remediation for the types of skills that are particularly difficult for middle school students with language disabilities in classroom settings. The fifth section, Using Basic Language Skills, provides opportunities to practice a variety of skills in a broader, more curriculum-oriented context.

Here are some particular features of *HELP for Middle School*:

- The vocabulary and difficulty level of this material ranges from grades four through seven.
- Stimulus items are arranged in order from the easiest to the most difficult whenever possible.
- IEP goals are presented at the bottom of each page to further explain the individual tasks as well as to assist in writing goals and objectives.
- Carryover activities are provided (on pages 167-168) to expand and reinforce individual tasks and to help incorporate therapy objectives into group activities.

As with other volumes in the *HELP* series, I have strived to present as many items as possible for each task with minimal explanation. The tasks and items are intended to provide a basis for language remediation that should be expanded and enhanced by you to reflect each student's individual experiences and her own unique needs and interests.

Here are some guidelines to help you more effectively use this book:

1. Your discretion is essential in selecting and modifying tasks to best meet each student's individual needs. Since the ages, skills, and language experiences of each student will vary, use your own judgment in deciding which portions of each task to use with individual students. Use assessment data as a guide for initial selection of tasks and ongoing data collection to identify new areas of need.

Introduction, *continued*

2. Common, correct responses have been provided for most items in the Answer Key (beginning on page 169). There may be other acceptable answers which are not listed. Use your judgment to determine the correctness of any response. Look for opportunities for students to provide alternate, correct responses. When appropriate, discuss why their answer may not or could not be correct.
3. Several repetitions of tasks and items may be necessary before target accuracy levels are reached. Keep track of performance on the specific items you determine to be within your student's ability range. Periodically re-check performance on tasks that have been mastered to ensure long-term maintenance.
4. Strive to achieve carryover of therapy objectives and outcomes to the classroom. Incorporate content area vocabulary and knowledge into therapy sessions whenever possible. Keep classroom teachers apprised of therapy objectives and the student's needs as well as his or her successes.
5. Although many of the tasks in this volume are presented as written worksheets, use your own judgment in deciding to present the lessons orally or as written work. Keep in mind that a student may perform well in one mode but have difficulty in the other.

As I complete this newest addition to the *HELP* series, I would like to thank all of the speech-language pathologists, teachers, and parents who have provided positive feedback, support, and suggestions for improvement and expansion of the *HELP* series over the past 17 years, as well as the LinguSystems' staff, whose energy and enthusiasm keep me inspired. I hope this volume will enable you to provide the ongoing instruction and support needed by our middle school students as they continue trying to master our complicated and often illogical language system.

Andrea