

# *Introduction to* Teaching Students With Communication Disorders

**Peggy** speaks clearly when her teacher calls on her for information, but some of the words don't sound exactly right when she answers. "Keep away fwom me, you was-cally wabbit" is one of her favorite sayings. Although this type of substitution is common for children in kindergarten and first grade, it is beginning to cause problems for Peggy because her classmates are making fun of the way she says things, and her parents and teachers are concerned that it is no longer appropriate for her age.



**Sally's** teacher describes her speech as "just like a much younger child." She mispronounces words, omits sounds, and sometimes speaks too quickly to be easily understood. A speech-language pathologist described Sally's problem as a speech fluency disorder and recommended that she work on producing proper sounds more than on other areas of speech or language. She encouraged Sally's parents to help by using sentences with word pairs that illustrate the importance of pronunciation and speech sounds (e.g., "Did they present the present?" or "The graduate will graduate this spring") and by being models of proper articulation when they speak to her rather than calling attention to her dysfluencies.

*(Continued)*

## 8 Teaching Students With Communication Disorders

(Continued)

**Irving** is a high school student with a stuttering problem. Although his written work is outstanding, Irving is reluctant to volunteer answers in class, participate in group discussions, or give oral presentations. His stuttering is much worse when he is talking to people he doesn't know.



Grammatical errors (such as "she run to store") and immature language usage (such as "go now") are the most representative characteristics of **John's** language. He seldom uses complete sentences and often mixes, incorrectly uses, or omits parts of speech in his written and expressive language. He has a poor speaking vocabulary, and his language problems are beginning to cause serious problems with his peers.

**M**any students receiving special education have communication disorders. Some have such severe impairments that they need assistive devices, such as computerized speech aids, to communicate with others. Most, however, like Peggy, Sally, Irving, and John, have milder impairments. The special education category of Communication Disorders includes students whose problems producing speech or using language symbols interfere significantly with their ability to communicate. In most school districts, speech-language pathologists work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide services to students with communication disorders.