

Advances in Communication and Swallowing 2022 Autumn Online Lecture

Waiting list management in speech and language therapy services: Perspectives and innovations

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Waiting lists for speech and language therapy exist when supply does not meet demand. Waiting for services reduces service users' access to early intervention and poses practical and ethical challenges for professionals to manage. This presentation will provide an overview of an extensive programme of research that explored: (a) perspectives of service users and professionals regarding speech and language therapy waiting lists; (b) speech and language therapists' waiting list management practices throughout the world; (c) the design and development of an evidence-based website; and (d) the evaluation of the Waiting for Speech Pathology website in two community-based randomised controlled trials. Innovative management strategies will be presented.

This research about waiting for speech and language therapy was published in the inaugural issue of *Advances in Communication and Swallowing* ([Waiting list management: Professionals' perspectives and innovations](#)) and in other journals across the world. Free resources are available on the Waiting for Speech Pathology website: <https://wnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/our-services/speech-pathology/>

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Waiting list management in speech and language therapy services: Perspectives and innovations

Thesis

McGill, N. (2020). *Wait-Lifting: Active waiting for speech and language services by children and families* (Doctoral thesis). Charles Sturt University, Australia. <https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/en/publications/wait-lifting-active-waiting-for-speech-and-language-services-by-c>

Resources

McGill, N. (2021). *Waiting list management in speech pathology*. Self-paced learning program on-demand, Speech Pathology Australia (online), Australia.

<https://learninghub.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/speechpathologyaust/1706-waiting-list-management-in-speech-pathology>

Waiting for Speech Pathology Team. (2018) *Waiting for speech pathology*. Western NSW Local Health District. Retrieved from: <https://wnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/our-services/speech-pathology>

Journal articles

McGill, N., Crowe, K., & McLeod, S. (2020). "Many wasted months": Stakeholders' perspectives about waiting for speech-language pathology services. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 22(3), 313-326.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2020.1747541>

McGill, N., & McLeod, S. (2019). Aspirations for a website to support families' active waiting for speech-language pathology. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 21(3), 263-274.

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2050571X.2020.1716471>

McGill, N., McLeod, S., Crowe, K., Wang, C., & Hopf, S. C. (2021). Waiting lists and prioritization of children for services: Speech-language pathologists' perspectives. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 91(May-June), 106099.

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McGill, N., McLeod, S., & Hopf, S. C. (2021). Waiting list management: Professionals' perspectives and innovations. *Advances in Communication and Swallowing*, 24(1), 5-19. <https://doi.org/10.3233/ACS-210026>

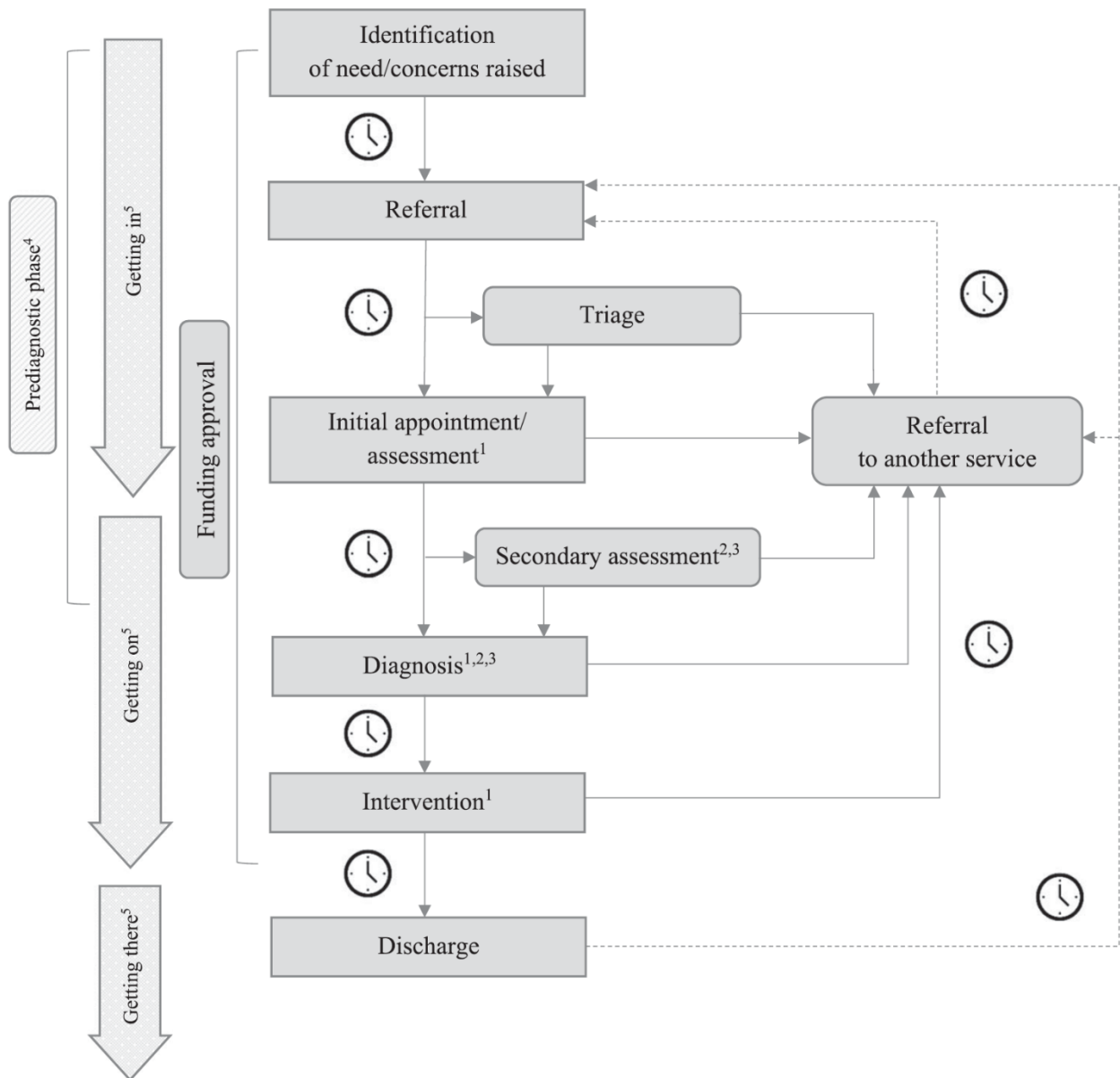
McGill, N., McLeod, S., Ivory, N., Davis, E., & Rohr, K. (2021). Randomised controlled trial evaluating active versus passive waiting for speech-language pathology. *Folia Phoniatrica et Logopaedica*, 73(4), 335-354.

<https://doi.org/10.1159/000508830>

McLeod, S., Davis, E., Rohr, K., McGill, N., Miller, K., Roberts, A., Thornton, S., Ahio, N., & Ivory, N. (2020). Waiting for speech-language pathology services: A randomised controlled trial comparing therapy, advice, and device. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 22(3), 372-386.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2020.1731600>

Care pathways in speech and language therapy services



Example speech-language pathology pathway (© Nicole McGill, 2019). Figure extends the work of Fogarty and Cronin (2008)¹, Lebel et al. (2003)², Thorne et al. (1999)³, Giske and Gjengedal (2007)⁴, Glogowska and Campbell (2000)⁵, McGill, Crowe, and McLeod (2020), and McGill, McLeod, Crowe, et al. (2021).

McGill, N., & McLeod, S. (2020). Waiting list management in speech-language pathology: Translating research to practice. *Speech, Language and Hearing*, 23(1), 2-8.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2050571X.2020.1716471>

Summary of waiting list management strategies © Nicole McGill (2021)

Topic	Example references
1. SLP workforce actions	
1.1. Recruitment¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating more SLP positions • Employing more SLPs 	Arnold et al. (2003) ^b ; Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017) ^a ; Harding et al. (2018) ^b ; Hutchins et al. (2010) ^a ; Keating et al. (1998) ^a
1.2. SLP experience¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and upskilling SLPs • Retaining experienced SLPs 	Gillham & Ristevski (2007) ^b ; Hutchins et al. (2010) ^a ; Keane, Lincoln, & Smith (2012) ^b ; Kenny, Lincoln, & Balandin (2010) ^a
1.3. Flexibility¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting flexible work hours 	Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017) ^a ; Kossek & Nichol (1992) ^c
1.4. Time constraints¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of more time 	Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017) ^a
1.5. SLP higher education¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying SLP higher education courses 	Lincoln, Adamson, & Cant (2001) ^a ; Wylie et al. (2014) ^a
1.6. Students in the workplace¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using students in the workplace 	Allan et al. (2011) ^{a,b} ; Sales et al. (2015) ^a
1.7. Support from management/organisation¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining increased managerial or organisational support 	Rachlis (2005) ^c
1.8. Professional efficiency² (e.g., working harder/doing more)	Duckett, Breadon, & Farmer (2014) ^c ; Naiker et al. (2018) ^{b,c} ; Nancarrow et al. (2013) ^b ; Rachlis (2005) ^c
2. Organisational process and policy actions	
2.1. Funding^{1,2}	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising alternate funding models^{1,2} • Obtaining increased public health funding¹ • Lobbying the government² (e.g., for more funding) 	Kreindler (2010) ^c ; Skeat et al. (2010) ^a ; Stute et al. (2018) ^b Kreindler (2010) ^c ; Ruggero et al. (2012) ^a Allan et al. (2007) ^{a,b} ; Paige-Smith (2013) ^e ; Polikowski & Santos-Eggimann (2002) ^d
2.2. Administrative strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLP caseload allocation¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professionals having autonomy over their waiting lists ○ Allocating caseload based on client factors • Implementing waiting list policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducting audits and reviews¹ ○ Having separate waiting lists (e.g., weekend vs weekday appointments)¹ ○ Not keeping a waiting list² ○ Independent oversight of waiting lists² • Scheduling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using cancellation lists¹ ○ Offering flexible appointment times¹ • Implementing administrative policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementing failure to attend/unable to contact policies¹ ○ Registration forms¹ ○ Limiting advertising¹ ○ Streamlining of documentation¹ or processes 	Pickstone (2007) ^a Hughes & Griffiths (1997) ^c ; Lincoln et al. (2014a) ^b ; Rachlis (2005) ^c ; Stute et al. (2018) ^b Davidson & Bressler (2010) ^b Little & Grasselli (2013) ^a ; Shiraev & McGarry (1996) ^a Naiker et al. (2018) ^{b,c} ; Sanmartin et al. (2000) ^c ; Sell & Ma (1996) ^a ; Stute et al. (2018) ^b Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017) ^a Breton et al. (2018) ^c ; Kreindler (2010) ^c ; Naiker et al. (2018) ^{b,c} ; Rachlis (2005) ^c ; Sanmartin et al. (2000) ^c Flores, Price, & Rayl (2017) ^c ; Rachlis (2005) ^c Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017) ^a Naiker et al. (2018) ^{b,c} ; Rachlis (2005) ^c Kreindler (2010) ^c ; Lodge & Bamford (2008) ^b ; Rachlis (2005) ^c

2.3. Referrals

- Referring clients on to other services^{1,2}
 - Referring clients to other services with shorter waiting lists Wright (1998)^c
Kennedy & McConnell (1993)^c; Kreindler (2010)^c; Peeters & Bayer (1999)^b; Vallerand & McLennan (2013)^b
- Access to other services while waiting^{1,2}
 - Clients waiting on more than one waiting list Passalent, Landry, & Cott (2010)^b; Seabrook et al. (2019)^a
Kreindler (2010)^c
 - Clients accessing community groups while waiting DePompei et al. (2001)^{a,b}; Langstaff et al. (2014)^a

2.4. Organisational strategies

- Standards
 - Developing waiting time benchmarks or maximum waiting times^{1,2} Hurst & Siciliani (2003)^c; Scott et al. (2002)^b
Dimakou et al. (2009)^c; Kreindler (2010)^c; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}; Payne (2001)^c
 - Introducing key performance indicators regarding waiting times¹ Shiraev & McGarry (1996)^a
 - Implementing quality improvement projects¹ Mormer & Stevans (2019)^a; Phelps & Coker (2019)^c; Roberts (2017)^a;
 - Forcing SLPs into actions¹ Lincoln, Adamson, & Cant (2001)^a; Little & Grasselli (2013)^a; O'Callaghan, McAllister, & Wilson (2005a,b)^a; Prud'homme (2007)^a
- Restrictions on services
 - Introducing prioritisation guidelines based on client factors^{1,2}
 - Functional impact^{1,2} Hughes, Carrick, & Byrne (2013)^b; Kreindler (2010)^c; Stute et al. (2018)^b; McGill, McLeod, Crowe et al. (2021)
 - Severity^{1,2} Roberts (2017)^a; Rvachew & Rafaat (2014)^a; Seabrook et al. (2019)^a
 - Diagnosis/disorder type^{1,2} Lindsay (2007)^e; McCartney, 2000^a; Roulstone (1995)^a
 - Level of clinical need¹ Morgan et al. (2017)^a
 - Age^{1,2} Harding et al (2012)^b
 - Complex cases¹ Kenny & Lincoln (2012)^a; Lindsay (2007)^e; McCartney, 2000^a; Rvachew & Rafaat (2014)^a; Ward, Birkett, & Kellett (1990)^a
 - Intervention history² Johnson & Bloomberg (1988)^a
 - Error type² Dodd (2007)^a; Rousseau et al. (2007)^a
 - Urgency¹ Morgan et al. (2017)^a
 - Vulnerability of family (cultural identity^{1,2}, socioeconomic status¹), Rachlis (2005)^c; Roberts (2017)^a; Sales et al. (2015)^a; Sanmartin et al. (2000)^c; Ward et al. (1990)^a
 - Emotion-based advocacy^{1,2} Benzie et al. (2011)^a; Flatley, Kenny, & Lincoln (2014)^a; McCormack & Verdon (2015)^a
 - Prognosis¹, permanency, or chronicity Lindsay (2007)^e; Ward et al. (1990)^a
 - Expected duration of therapy¹ Kenny & Lincoln (2012)^a; McCartney, 2000^a; Pickstone (1997)^a; Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists [RCSLT] (1996)^a
 - Location of client¹ Carlon, Carter, & Stephenson (2013)^b
 - Returning client¹ Meikle (1995)^a; Rachlis (2005)^c
 - Sibling of known client¹ Meikle (1995)^a
 - Introducing prioritisation guidelines based on service factors^{1,2}
 - Type of service² Byrne & Lyddiard (2013)^a; Ruggero et al. (2012)^a
 - Role of service² Kenny & Joffres (2008)^c; McGill, McLeod, Crowe et al. (2021)
 - Diagnostic purposes¹ Chan (2009)^b
Lindsay (2007)^e
Ward et al. (1990)^a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eligibility for group intervention¹ ▪ Referral date¹ ▪ Referral type¹ ○ Closing the books/not accepting referrals^{1,2} ○ Introducing costs/fees for service^{1,2} ○ Implementing discharge processes^{1,2} ○ Introducing eligibility criteria^{1,2} ○ Limiting service provision^{1,2} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reducing duration of service provision¹ ▪ Reducing frequency of sessions¹ ▪ Capping/limiting sessions² ○ Offering assessments based on availability of therapy¹ 	<p>Willoughby, Chan, & Marques (2016)^a</p> <p>McAllister et al. (2011)^a Chan (2009)^b</p> <p>Hutton & Caron (2005)^b; Young et al. (2017)^c</p> <p>Swigert (2015)^{a,c}; Tsiplova et al. (2019)^b</p> <p>Corrigan et al. (2011)^c; Hersh (2010)^a; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}; Vasquez, Bingham, & Barnett (2008)^b</p> <p>Little & Grasselli (2013)^a; Skeat, Morgan, & Nickless (2009)^a; Stute et al. (2018)^b</p> <p>Cotelleso, Mazer, & Majnemer (2009)^b; Majnemer et al. (2002)^b; Ziviani et al. (2013)^b Dworkin & Lyddon (1991)^b; Patti et al. (2003)^b</p> <p>Baker (2012)^a; McLeod & Baker (2014)^a</p> <p>Baker (2010)^a; Hersh (2010)^a Conroy & Noone (2014)^a; Papathanasiou & Heron (1998)^a</p>
<p>2.5. Evidence-based practice^{1,2}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balancing conflict/dilemmas regarding waiting list management strategies^{1,2} 	<p>Flatley, Kenny, & Lincoln (2014)^a</p>
<p>3. SLP service delivery actions</p>	
<p>3.1. Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementing triage/intake models^{1,2} ● Screening^{1,2} ● Providing early/immediate assessment¹ ● Providing consultative services^{1,2} ● Offering drop in assessments¹ ● Providing group assessments¹ ● Implementing a “first stop” service¹ or primary contact clinic ● Monitoring^{1,2} ● Offering a single session model¹ 	<p>Austin (2010)^a</p> <p>Harding et al. (2018, 2019)^b; Harding & Taylor (2013)^{a,b}; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}; Stute et al. (2018)^b Ball (2007)^a; Mathison et al (2016)^a</p> <p>De Saeger et al. (2014)^b; McGill, McLeod et al. (2020)^a</p> <p>Poulin et al. (2018)^c; Woods et al. (2011)^a</p> <p>Mathison et al. (2016)^a; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}; Price (1994)^b Nancollis, Lawrie, & Dodd (2005)^a; Ward, Sullivan, & Gilmore (2016)^b</p> <p>Alston et al. (2015)^{b,e}; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}</p> <p>Ball (2007)^a; McGill, McLeod et al. (2020)^a; Roulstone et al. (2003)^a; Singleton (2018)^a; Ciccone, Hennessy, & Stokes (2012)^a; Eade, Telfer, & Tollit (2018)^{b,c}; Hoyt et al. (2018)^b; Hymmen, Stalker, & Cait (2013)^b; Ryan & O’Connor (2017)^b</p>
<p>3.2. Therapy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing therapy blocks^{1,2} ● Providing group therapy^{1,2} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole class therapy² ○ Paired therapy² ○ Offering group therapy while waiting² ● Offering intensive therapy programs^{1,2} ● Providing one-to-one sessions¹ ● Offering weekend services¹ 	<p>Carter et al. (2011)^a</p> <p>Arnott et al. (2014)^a; Cleave et al. (2006)^a; Ohlsson et al. (2018)^a; Page et al. (1994)^a; Willoughby, Chan, & Marques (2016)^a</p> <p>Bratton (2010)^{b,e}; Ebbels et al. (2017)^a; Nelson & Allison (2004)^b; Smith-Lock et al. (2013)^a Ebbels et al. (2017)^a; Farahani & Delavar (2018)^b Ruesch, Helmes, & Bengel (2017)^b</p> <p>Faux et al. (2009)^b; Gallagher & Chiat (2009)^a</p> <p>Campbell (1979)^a; Ebbels et al. (2017)^a; McLeod, Davis et al. (2020)^a</p> <p>Davis, Bauer, & Rohr (2017)^a; Macht et al. (2012)^a</p>
<p>3.3. Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working in partnership with parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing advice/training^{1,2} 	<p>Ruggero et al. (2012)^a</p> <p>Cartwright-Hatton et al. (2011)^b; Mathison et al. (2016)^a; Purcal et al. (2018)^b; Vallerand & McLennan (2013)^b</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing home programs and information^{1,2} ○ Providing phone support¹ ○ Offering support groups² ● Working in partnership with professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing multi-disciplinary services (e.g., key worker model, joint sessions)^{1,2} ○ Providing advice/training^{1,2} ○ Using non-SLPs (e.g., therapy assistants) to deliver services^{1,2} ○ Providing preschool/school-based programs (universal access programs)^{1,2} ○ Increasing capacity of primary care services² 	<p>Meyer et al. (2018)^{a,b}; Wertz et al. (1986)^a; Zabiela, Williams, & Leitão (2007)^a</p> <p>Ehde et al. (2015)^b; Morris et al. (2011)^b; Olson et al. (2016)^a</p> <p>Denmon (2019)^a; Morhardt et al (2019)^a</p> <p>DePompei et al. (2001)^{a,b}; Roush, Wilson, & Alberg (2008)^a; Ryan & O'Connor (2017)^b; Snyder & Ubben (2003)^a; Stute et al. (2018)^b; Tippin, Maranzan, & Mountain (2016)^b</p> <p>Snyder & Ubben (2003)^a; Weiner & Greene (2014)^b</p> <p>O'Brien et al. (2013)^a; Schwarz et al. (2019)^a</p> <p>Ciccone, Hennessey, & Stokes (2012)^a; Lincoln et al. (2014b)^a</p> <p>Cup et al. (2011)^b; Stute et al. (2018)^b</p>
<p>3.4. Prevention-focused services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embedding services in universal services^{1,2} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detecting needs early ● Engaging in public health promotion¹ 	<p>Kreindler (2010)^c;</p> <p>Breen, Wildy, & Saggars (2011)^a; Horn & Banerjee (2009)^a; Woods et al. (2011)^a</p> <p>Roush, Wilson, & Alberg (2008)^a</p> <p>Snow (2009)^a; Wylie et al. (2014)^a</p>
<p>3.5. Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing support/education using technology¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using devices (apps, websites, online support groups)¹ ● Using technology as a service delivery method^{1,2} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing telehealth assessment or therapy sessions^{1,2} 	<p>Loomes & Montgomery (2012)^a; Erickson et al. (2012)^a; Furlong, Erickson, & Morris (2017)^a</p> <p>Dural & Ünal-Logacev (2018)^a; Furlong et al. (2018)^a; McGill & McLeod (2019)^a; McGill, McLeod et al. (2020)^a; McLeod, Davis et al. (2020)^a; McLeod, Ballard et al. (2020)^a</p> <p>Hart (2010)^a; Hill & Miller (2012)^a; Naiker et al. (2018)^{b,c}; Ward & Burns (2012)^a</p>

Note. SLP, speech-language pathology

Sources: ¹McGill, McLeod, & Hopf (2021); ²McGill, Crowe, & McLeod (2020).

Reference discipline: ^aSpeech-language pathology, ^bAllied health, ^cPrimary care, ^dBusiness/insurance, ^eEducation.

Adapted from McGill (2020).

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