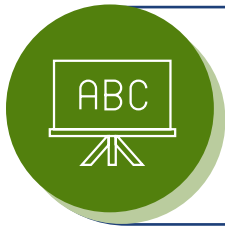




institute for
multi-sensory
education



CASE STUDY



Sea of Sounds Speech Therapy & Learning Center

Brooklyn, New York

Learning to read requires much more than recognizing letters and sounding out words. For many children, reading challenges begin long before they encounter a book.

Gehan Akleh, MS, CCC-SLP, TSSLD, is an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist and New York State-certified Teacher of Students with Speech and Language Disabilities. Known to many of her students, families, and throughout the community as “Ms. Gigi,” she is the Founder & Clinical Director of Sea of Sounds Speech Therapy & Learning Center.

After eight years as a speech-language pathologist in New York City public schools, Gigi saw firsthand how often speech and language gaps were the real root cause of a child’s reading struggles, yet went untreated in a system that kept the two disciplines separate.

Determined to bridge that gap, Gigi founded Sea of Sounds Speech Therapy & Learning Center in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. When searching for a Structured Literacy program that matched both the science of reading and her clinical expertise, she discovered IMSE.



Today, IMSE’s Orton-Gillingham Plus curriculum serves as the foundation of the clinic’s literacy programming, allowing students to strengthen foundational reading skills while simultaneously addressing the speech and language challenges affecting literacy development.



THE CHALLENGE

Throughout her work as a speech-language pathologist in the public school setting, Gigi saw how speech-language services and literacy instruction often addressed closely related skills from different perspectives. Speech-language pathologists primarily targeted students' identified speech and language goals while supporting access to the academic curriculum. For students also receiving services such as SETSS or instruction within an ICT classroom, explicit phonics and reading goals were typically addressed by their teachers or literacy providers.

While each professional played an important and distinct role, Gigi recognized an opportunity for greater integration between the two areas. Many of the foundational skills involved in learning to read – such as phonological awareness, speech-sound processing, auditory discrimination, vocabulary, and oral language – are also deeply connected to speech-language development. This led her to envision an approach in which explicit, systematic phonics instruction could be intentionally blended with speech-language pathology expertise.

Gigi also saw multilingual learners whose language differences were sometimes mistaken for language disorders, leading to interventions that didn't fully meet their needs. She understood how to distinguish between the two and identify the specific language skills contributing to literacy challenges.

Before implementing IMSE, Gigi pieced together instructional materials from multiple sources and previously completed another Orton-Gillingham training. While valuable, it lacked the comprehensive instructional framework and consistency she wanted to build into her own practice.

"I started realizing there was such a big disconnect between speech therapy and reading intervention. Once I was able to work on the underlying speech and language weaknesses alongside Structured Literacy, I started seeing such a big difference in student progress."

Ms. Gigi

Founder & Clinical Director,
Sea of Sounds Speech Therapy & Learning Center



THE SOLUTION

Gigi discovered IMSE through educational resources shared online and was immediately drawn to the structure of the methodology. She quickly became a strong advocate for the approach, and when she launched Sea of Sounds, IMSE OG+ became the foundation of every literacy program.

Every student begins with a comprehensive assessment to determine current literacy skills rather than placement by grade level. Students are then grouped according to their instructional needs, ensuring each child receives explicit, systematic instruction at the appropriate pace.

"Reading isn't only a visual task. It relies on speech sound processing, language comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, morphology, and oral language skills."

Ms. Gigi

What distinguishes Sea of Sounds is how Structured Literacy is integrated with speech-language pathology. While IMSE provides explicit instruction in phonics, spelling, and decoding, Gigi also identifies and addresses the speech and language factors contributing to reading difficulties. Rather than treating speech and literacy as separate disciplines, Sea of Sounds combines both into a unified instructional model that helps students understand not only how to read, but why they may be struggling in the first place.



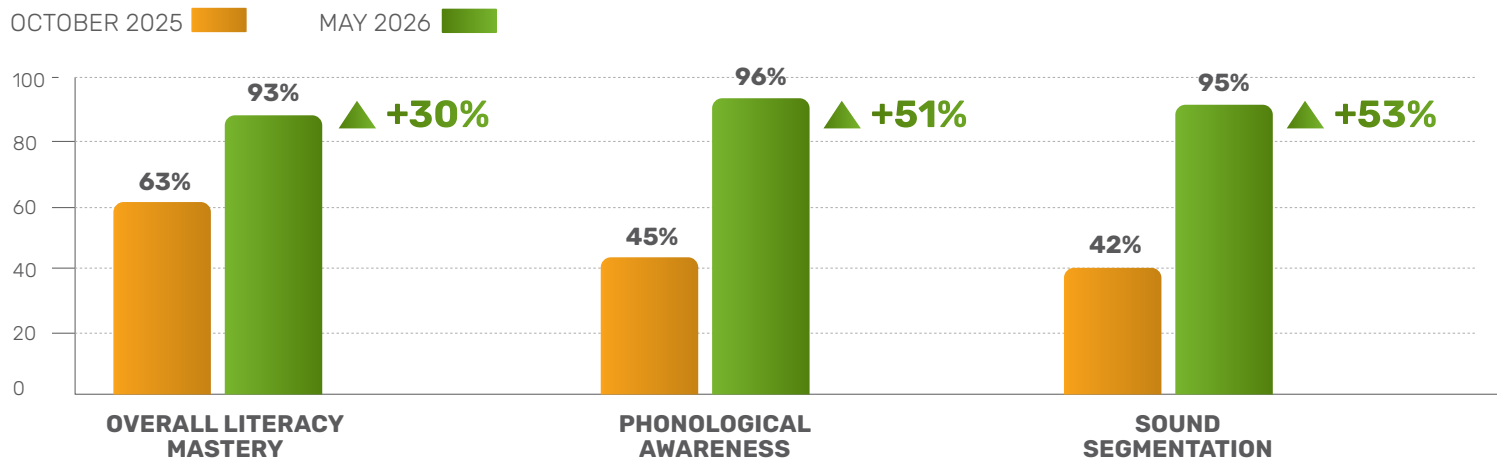


THE RESULTS

After implementing IMSE OG+ in September 2025, Sea of Sounds quickly began seeing measurable improvements across its literacy program.

- Among 23 kindergarten through third-grade students with underlying speech and language needs, average literacy mastery increased from 57% in the fall to 80% during winter assessments before reaching 91% by spring.
- Each grade level gained between 30 and 40 percentage points over the course of the year.
- That growth was even more pronounced in first grade.

Grade 1 Literacy Success at a Glance



Transforming Literacy Through Speech-Language Pathology

Sea of Sounds demonstrates that Structured Literacy is effective wherever language and literacy intersect. Gigi's model shows that Structured Literacy and speech-language pathology don't have to operate on separate tracks.

As Sea of Sounds expands its footprint with a second location and a new three-classroom center, while continuing to train additional clinicians in IMSE OG+, the practice is demonstrating how speech-language pathologists can play an even greater role in literacy instruction.



ABOUT IMSE

IMSE is an education pioneer and the leading provider of Structured Literacy solutions based on the science of reading. IMSE solutions incorporate the Orton-Gillingham methodology and all five pillars of literacy to empower teachers from day one.

Visit imse.com or contact info@imse.com to learn more about our work with school districts around the country.



institute for
multi-sensory
education

2000 Town Center, Suite 2000
Southfield, MI 48075