

# Maximizing Speech Outcomes in Children with ASD: Group vs. Individual Therapy

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## Introduction

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is often associated with articulation deficits that impact communication and social interactions. While individual therapy is a well-established approach for improving speech sound accuracy, *research on the effectiveness of group therapy for children with ASD remains limited* (Farquharson, Tambyraja, & Lapa, 2020).
- Determining whether group therapy can be as effective as individual therapy—particularly based on the severity of articulation difficulties—could help *optimize treatment strategies* and *improve service accessibility*. Group scheduling allows for more children to be seen at once, optimizing clinician workload and making *therapy more cost-effective in school and clinical settings*.
- Research on articulation therapy for children with ASD demonstrates that individualized, targeted interventions and structured feedback lead to improvements in speech sound production (Petinou, 2021). Group therapy may offer advantages in greater peer interaction and opportunities for social communication. However, its effectiveness, compared to individual therapy for children with different levels of articulation deficits, remains unclear.
- This study examines whether articulation therapy outcomes vary based on therapy format and severity of deficits.** It is hypothesized that group therapy will be equally effective for children with mild to moderate articulation difficulties, while individual therapy will be more effective for those with severe deficits. Findings may help guide clinical decision-making and contribute to evidence-based therapy practices.

## Approach

- A comprehensive literature review examined the effectiveness of group versus individual articulation therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Three databases—Google Scholar, YU Library, and AshaWire—were searched using keywords related to ASD, articulation deficits, speech sound disorders, group therapy, individual therapy, school-aged children, and therapy effectiveness.
- Eighteen peer-reviewed studies met the inclusion criteria.* Key details, including participant characteristics, therapy type, and speech sound accuracy outcomes were analyzed. A comparative synthesis of findings assessed whether initial articulation severity influenced therapy effectiveness.
- By comparing multiple studies, this review identified consistent trends and potential limitations in existing research. The selection of peer-reviewed sources ensure reliability, contributing to a clearer understanding of best practices for articulation therapy in children with ASD.

## Findings

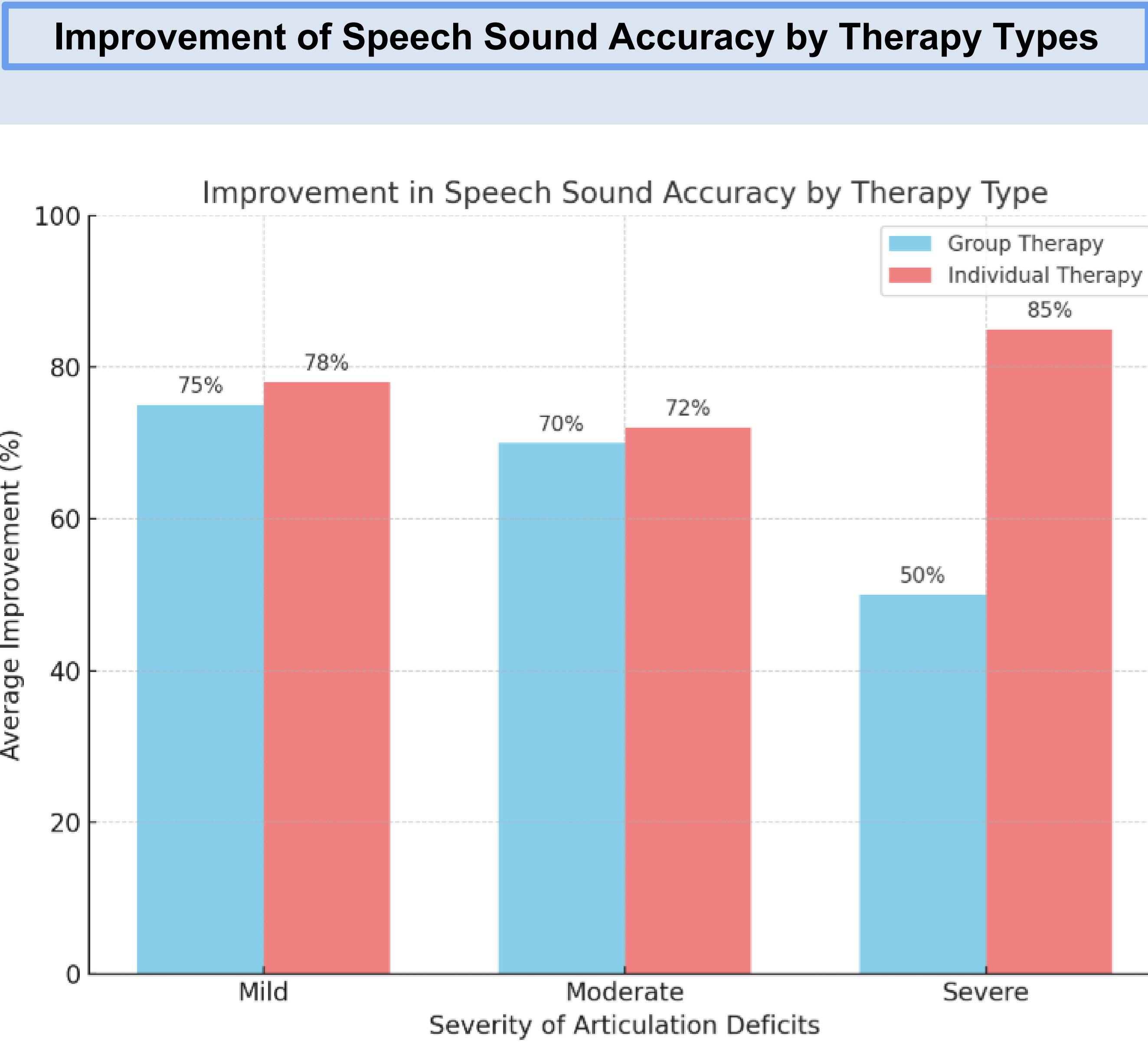


Figure 1: Average improvement scores (%) for group vs. individual therapy. Mild to moderate cases showed similar progress in both settings, while severe deficits improved more with individual therapy.

- Findings indicate that the effectiveness of group versus individual articulation therapy depends on the severity of a child's speech deficits. As shown in Figure 1, children with mild (75% vs. 78%) and moderate (70% vs. 72%) deficits showed similar improvement in both therapy settings. However, children with severe deficits made greater progress in individual therapy (85%) compared to group therapy (50%).
- These results suggest that **while group therapy effectively supports mild to moderate cases, individualized intervention may be more beneficial for severe articulation deficits.** This aligns with research emphasizing the need for targeted approaches for complex speech needs (Farquharson et al., 2020). The findings support integrating group therapy in school settings for children with less severe deficits, optimizing resources while maintaining effective outcomes.

## Conclusions

- This study found that group therapy is as effective as individual therapy for children with mild- to- moderate articulation deficits, while those with severe deficits benefit more from individual therapy.
- These findings support the integration of group therapy in school settings to maximize resources while maintaining effectiveness for children with ASD and less severe speech challenges.**
- A key limitation is variability in therapy implementation, such as differences in session structure and clinician expertise. *Future research should examine long-term outcomes and explore ways to enhance group therapy for severe deficits*, including the use of technology like video modeling to bridge the gap between group and individual interventions.

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