

Phoenix Speech Therapist Julie Mercadante Highlights Growing Awareness of Myofunctional Therapy Among Arizona Families

Phoenix speech therapist Julie Mercadante discusses myofunctional therapy, speech development, mouth breathing, and Arizona ESA support options

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Phoenix](#) speech therapist Julie Mercadante, founder of Juniper [Speech Therapy](#), was a guest on the Phoenix Business Brief Podcast, discussing the importance of [myofunctional](#) therapy and the role breathing, tongue posture, and oral function can play in childhood speech development.



Julie Mercadante, founder, Juniper Speech Therapy, appeared on the Phoenix Business Brief Podcast

The full episode can be found here: <https://phoenixbusinessbrief.com/episodes/myofunctional-therapy-julie-mercadante-phoenix-juniper-speech-therapy-mpjwt742>

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*Julie Mercadante, Founder,
Juniper Speech Therapy*

“I have been a speech language pathologist for about 25 years,” Mercadante said. “I founded Juniper Speech Therapy nearly six years ago, specializing in speech therapy with a focus on myofunctional therapy.”

According to Mercadante, myofunctional therapy looks beyond traditional speech sound production and examines

how the tongue functions, including resting posture, breathing habits, and swallowing patterns.

“Myofunctional therapy is looking at how the tongue functions,” Mercadante said. “Finding the overlap between how a child breathes, eats, sleeps, you know, can really affect how they

ultimately speak.”

Myofunctional therapy is a specialized and targeted approach used within speech therapy to address the oral muscle patterns that can impact speech clarity and efficiency. When the tongue rests too far forward or moves incorrectly during swallowing, it can interfere with accurate sound production. Myofunctional therapy focuses on retraining these muscle movements by improving tongue placement, lip seal, jaw stability, and nasal breathing. By strengthening and coordinating the oral structures, students build the foundation needed for clear articulation, effective swallowing, and overall oral function. This integrated, functional approach helps correct the why behind persistent speech errors, not just the what, leading to more consistent and lasting progress in therapy.

Mercadante said many parents initially seek help after children continue struggling despite years of traditional speech therapy.

“Traditional speech therapy often focuses on sound production, while myofunctional therapy looks at the underlying causes of speech issues, such as tongue posture and breathing habits,” Mercadante said.

She noted that awareness of myofunctional therapy has increased in recent years, partly due to information shared online and through parent communities.

Mercadante said parents should watch for symptoms including mouth breathing, snoring, restless sleep, picky eating, drooling, and persistent speech errors.

“A little snore might look cute or a little drool seems normal, but after a certain age, you know, may it might not be,” Mercadante said.

She emphasized the importance of early intervention for children showing potential signs of oral function or breathing issues.

“I feel very strongly about the early intervention and learning about how important it is to breathe through the nose,” Mercadante said. “I get a lot of kids at a point where I think it might be not too late, but I wish they would've come in sooner.”

Juniper Speech Therapy provides speech therapy and myofunctional therapy services for families throughout Arizona through both in-person and virtual appointments.

Mercadante said her practice works with Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) families throughout the Greater Phoenix metro area who are seeking therapy services outside traditional school settings.

Parents can learn more about Juniper Speech Therapy at www.juniperspeechtherapy.com.

Curt D Mercadante
Atlas Point Media
[email us here](#)

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