

## **LANGUAGE DISORDER**

People with language disorder have difficulty expressing themselves and understanding what others are saying. This is unrelated to hearing problems. Language disorder, formerly known as receptive-expressive language disorder, is common in young children.

### **CAUSES:**

For most infants and children, language develops naturally beginning at birth. To develop language, a child must be able to hear, see, understand, and remember. Children must also have the physical ability to form speech.

When the cause is unknown, it is called a developmental language disorder.

Problems with receptive language skills usually begin before age 4. Some mixed language disorders are caused by a brain injury. These conditions are sometimes misdiagnosed as developmental disorders.

Language disorders may occur in children with other developmental problems, autism spectrum disorder, hearing loss, and learning disabilities. A language disorder may also be caused by damage to the central nervous system, which is called aphasia.

Language disorders are rarely caused by a lack of intelligence.

Language disorders are different than delayed language. With delayed language, the child develops speech and language in the same way as other children, but later. In language disorders, speech and language do not develop normally. The child may have some language skills, but not others. Or, the way in which these skills develop will be different than usual.

### **SYMPTOMS:**

Language disorder is often noticed in childhood first. Your child may overuse “um” and “uh” because they cannot recall the right word.

Other symptoms include:

- reduced vocabulary in comparison to other children of the same age
- limited ability to form sentences
- impaired ability to use words and connect sentences to explain or describe something
- reduced ability to have a conversation
- leaving words out

- saying words in the wrong order
- repeating a question while thinking of an answer
- confusing tenses (for example, using past tense instead of present)

Some of these symptoms are part of normal language development. However, your child may have a language disorder if several of these issues are persistent and don't improve.

## **DIAGNOSIS:**

Your child's health care provider will ask about your child's language use, and look at his or her medical history. Your child may have a physical exam and hearing tests. He or she may see a psychologist. Your health care provider will likely refer your child to a speech-language pathologist (SLP). This is a specialist who can help diagnose and treat your child.

An SLP will evaluate your child during play. This may be done in a group setting with other children. Or it may be done one-on-one with your child. The SLP will look at how your child speaks, listens, follows directions, understands the names of things, repeats phrases or rhymes, and performs in other language activities.

## **TREATMENT:**

The disorder is often treated through the collective efforts of parents, teachers, speech-language pathologists, and other health professionals.

- Medical exam

The first course of action is to visit your doctor for a full physical. This will help rule out or diagnose other conditions, such as a hearing problem or other sensory impairment.

- Language therapy

The common treatment for language disorder is speech and language therapy. Treatment will depend on the age of your child and the cause and extent of the condition. For example, your child may participate in one-on-one treatment sessions with a speech-language therapist or attend group sessions. The speech-language therapist will diagnose and treat your child according to their deficits.

Early intervention often plays an important role in a successful outcome.

- Home care options

Working with your child at home can help. Here are some tips:

- Speak clearly, slowly, and concisely when asking your child a question.
- Wait patiently as your child forms a response.
- Keep the atmosphere relaxed to reduce anxiety.
- Ask your child to put your instructions in their own words after giving an explanation or command.

Frequent contact with teachers is also important. Your child may be reserved in class and may not want to participate in activities that involve talking and sharing. Ask the teacher about class activities in advance to help prepare your child for upcoming discussions.

- Psychological therapy

Having difficulty understanding and communicating with others can be frustrating and may trigger episodes of acting out. Counseling may be needed to address emotional or behavioral issues.

## **COMMON TYPES:**

### **1. Receptive Language Disorder**

A child with receptive language disorder has trouble understanding language. They have trouble grasping the meaning of words they hear and see. This includes people talking to them and words they read in books or on signs. It can cause problems with learning and needs to be treated as early as possible.

A child with receptive language disorder may have difficulty:

- Understanding what people say
- Understanding gestures
- Understanding concepts and ideas
- Understanding what he or she reads
- Learning new words
- Answering questions
- Following directions
- Identifying objects

### **2. Expressive Language Disorder**

A child with expressive language disorder has trouble using language. The child may be able to understand what other people say, but he or she has difficulty when trying to talk, and is often unable to express what he or she is feeling and thinking. And it's not just about difficulty speaking words. The disorder can affect both written and spoken

language. And children who use sign language can still have trouble expressing themselves.

A child with expressive language disorder may have difficulty:

- Using words correctly
- Expressing thoughts and ideas
- Telling stories
- Using gestures
- Asking questions
- Singing songs or reciting poems
- Naming objects