

About Communication Disorders

A friend or family member may have a communication disorder if they have difficulty:

- Saying sounds the right way
- Being understood when they talk
- Following directions
- Answering questions
- Speaking smoothly and fluently
- Paying attention or focusing
- Recalling information
- Organizing their thoughts
- Using appropriate vocabulary
- Recalling a word when speaking
- Reading, spelling or writing
- Acting socially appropriate (using eye contact, staying on topic, initiating and turn taking in conversations, using and understanding facial expressions and body language, etc)

Or if they frequently:

- Speaking without a chronically hoarse or breathy voice
- shows signs of anger/frustration when not understood
- are often asked to repeat himself

Examples of Communication Disorders and Definitions

Articulation/Speech Sound Deficits

An articulation disorder involves problems making sounds. Sounds can be substituted, left off, added or changed. These errors may make it hard for people to understand you.

Young children often make speech errors. For instance, many young children sound like they are making a “w” sound for an “r” sound (e.g., “wabbit” for “rabbit”) or may leave sounds out of words, such as “nana” for “banana.” The child may have an articulation disorder if these errors continue past the expected age of correction

Language Delays and Disorders

The term receptive language refers to a child’s ability to understand what he or she hears or reads. Expressive language refers to a child’s ability to formulate thoughts, retrieve needed words from memory and organize those words into sentences for speech or writing

Fluency Disorders

An interruption in the flow of speaking which significantly interferes with communication.

Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)

CAS is a motor speech disorder. Children with CAS have problems saying sounds, syllables, and words. This is not because of muscle weakness or paralysis. The brain has problems planning to move the body parts (e.g., lips, jaw, tongue) needed for speech. The child knows what he or she wants to say, but his/her brain has difficulty coordinating the muscle movements necessary to say those words.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Aural Rehabilitation

Educational procedure used with hearing impaired persons to improve the effectiveness of their overall communication ability.

Assistive/Augmentative Communication

Augmentative Communication refers to multiple interventions for individuals with severe communication disorders in attempts to compensate for their impairment. Components of AAC systems include: symbols, aids (such as computers, electronic devices, or a communication book), strategies, and techniques.

Oral Motor Therapy

Difficulties in using the oral mechanism (teeth, tongue, jaw, lips and cheeks) for functional speech or feeding, including chewing, blowing, or making specific sounds.

Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing Disorders

Feeding disorders include problems gathering food and getting ready to suck, chew, or swallow it. For example, a child who cannot pick up food and get it to her mouth or cannot completely close her lips to keep food from falling out of her mouth may have a feeding disorder.