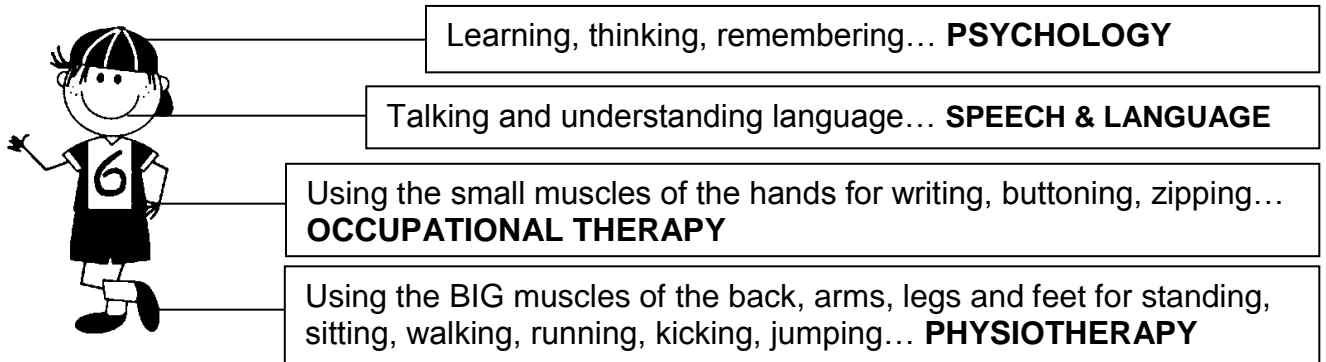


Speech and Language Therapy

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How a child develops...



Areas of Speech and Language

Understanding... **Comprehension**

Understanding has to come **FIRST** before learning to **USE** language. It is like the **GROUND** that a tree or flower grows from. Normally developing children can always understand **MORE** than they can say. E.g. A 1-year-old baby may understand the directions “Go to the table and get your spoon”, but he/she would **NOT** be able to **SAY** that sentence.

It is important to check children’s **HEARING** before anything else. Without **HEARING** the words, it is impossible to **UNDERSTAND** them.

Sounds... **Articulation**... Pronunciation

Normal Development of *Sounds*

Normally developing babies **BABBLE**: they practice making the sounds they hear. They start with easier sounds and then try harder sounds.

E.g. For “airplane”, a baby might say “aipai”, and then “aipain”.

What can go wrong with *sounds*?

1. Good language, but sounds immature (one or many problem sounds)

Specific sounds, such as “C” or “L” are difficult for the child to say.

These problem sounds make it hard for others to understand the child.

E.g. “Tar” instead of “Car”, or “Wunch” instead of “Lunch”

2. Weak muscles of the lips, tongue, and jaw (**dysarthria**)

E.g. A child with Cerebral Palsy may drool and have trouble controlling his/her mouth.

3. Problems with sending the message from the brain to the mouth (**apraxia**)

Apraxia is a problem in the brain. The muscles are NOT WEAK, and the child is NOT LAZY.

Instead, there is a “disconnection” somewhere in the pathway between the brain and the mouth, kind of like a bad cell phone connection.

E.g. A child with apraxia will say a sound RIGHT sometimes, and WRONG other times. They may have trouble copying the sounds you make, even if they can see your tongue or lips moving.

4. Problems with hearing the sounds (**hearing loss/deafness**).

If a child can't HEAR sounds, then they will not be able to SAY them.

5. Abnormal bones of the face (**cleft palate**).

When we blow on a bottle, different shapes of bottles make different types of sounds. Some children have a hole between their mouth and nose, which changes the shape of the mouth.

This means the sounds coming out of the mouth is DIFFERENT than the sounds that come out of a normally shaped mouth.

E.g.



Words ... **Vocabulary**

Normal development of *words*

Babies normally start to say words at 1 year old. They begin by LABELLING OBJECTS and PEOPLE, either to REQUEST (E.g. “baba”= I want bottle), or COMMENT (E.g. “dada”= There’s Daddy!).

Later, they start to LABEL ACTIONS (E.g. “run” = “She’s running!”). Normally developing children can UNDERSTAND and USE a word after the first or second time hearing it.

At about age 1 ½, when most children can say MANY words (about 50), they start to put 2 or 3 words together. E.g. “Big dog”, or “I want juice”

What can go wrong with *words*?

1. Slow to learn new words

Children with special needs need to hear a word MANY times before they can UNDERSTAND it, and MANY MORE times before they can USE it. Even though they hear a word, some children may have trouble connecting it to the object.

E.g. Mom says “Look, dog!”, but the child was looking at the car.

2. Problems putting 2-3 words together

Children who learn words slowly may NOT know ENOUGH words by age 1 ½ to start putting them together. OR

Some children with special needs CAN say many words alone, but DON’T know how to PUT THEM TOGETHER. E.g. “Want” might mean: want juice, OR want doll, OR want Mom.

3. Problems finding the right words (**word-finding**)

Some children have learned many words, but they have trouble REMEMBERING the word they want to use during a conversation. Their minds are like a DISORGANIZED LIBRARY, where the storybooks are mixed up with the cookbooks and the magazines.

E.g. These children may often say “ummm, you know...”, or use very GENERAL words, like “that thing”. They may be EMBARRASSED when they can’t remember a word.

Making sentences ... Grammar

Normal Development of *making sentences*

As children develop, they want to say more SOPHISTICATED ideas. They want to sound more MATURE. It is not enough for them to just put together 2 words. E.g. If a child says “Daddy car”, he might mean “That’s Daddy’s car!” or “Daddy’s in the car”. But we don’t know what he means if he only says “Daddy car”. Children make longer sentences (in English) by:

- USING LINKING WORDS E.g. in, on, and , the E.g. “Daddy is in the car”
- ADDING to the words E.g. plural S, -ING “Daddy goING out”

What can go wrong with *making sentences*?

1. Only uses key words (People say: “he sounds like a baby”)

Some children with special needs may put MANY words together, but they only use KEY words. This will make the child sound IMMATURE. E.g. “Me go bike tomorrow Daddy Mommy”.

2. Words are in the wrong order.

Some children with special needs will put words together in the WRONG order. This will make it difficult to understand what the child is saying. E.g. “What he is doing? “Go play me school”.

Conversation ... social skills ... being appropriate

Normal Development of *conversation*

Normally children learn HOW to be appropriate and use social skills by watching adults. Children learn to copy what adults do in the RIGHT way. Usually children are not taught these skills formally. It is easy for most children to learn the rules of conversation of their language. Many children with AUTISM have difficulty being appropriate and having conversations.

What can go wrong with *conversation*?

1. Problems following the rules of conversation

Not giving enough information

Giving too much information

Interrupting

Body orientation- not facing the listener

Personal space- talking too close to the listener

Being kind/tactful

Not Taking Turns

Staying on topic

2. Problems using language for different reasons

Requesting/Asking for something

Getting Attention

Commenting

Refusing e.g. saying "No more" or a tantrum

Greeting

Answering Questions

Joking

Making a Choice

What can you do to help?

Always keep in mind... Children with special needs have to be taught the same thing **OVER and OVER** again. You have to **SHOW** them and **REPEAT** yourself **A LOT!**

How to stimulate a child's language

1. Get **Joint Attention**: you and the child should pay attention to the same thing.

If you are looking at different objects, the child will not learn what you're teaching. Try to put yourself **IN FRONT** of the child. Make sure you **SHOW** him the objects you're talking about.

2. Make comments about what's going on.

Talk about ANYTHING you see.

For example: While walking down the hallway, you could say, "Look, Josiah is putting on his socks and shoes. First he's putting on his socks, then he will put on his shoes..."

3. Model longer sentences.

If the child says only one or two words, you should say 3 or 4 words.

For example:

Child: oh- oh... truck.

Adult: Yes, the truck fell down.

4. Emphasize key words.

Say the word you're trying to teach LOUDER and a little more SLOWLY than the other words.

For example:

Adult: Oh no. Dolly got hurt. She's **CRY... ING** (pretend to cry). Look, she's sad. She's **CRY...ING**.

5. Ask questions that give the child **SPACE** to talk.

Look...

What's happening?

How does it work?

Tell me more...

What now?

Why?

Do you want ____ or ____?

Where ...?

Questions that take a one-word answer are okay, but they **don't** encourage talking.

What colour?

Do you like that?

What is that?

Is that yours?

Who is that?

Do you want this?