

Communication delay in children

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Communication & Language Delay in Children Children communicate in many ways. Language and communication help us to socialise and express our needs. Babies use sounds, facial expressions and hand or arm gestures to express the way they are feeling. As they grow older their language skills gradually begin to develop and they will use more complex gestures such as pointing at objects. Language allows the child to express themselves and communicate. Alongside speech, reading, writing, drawing and signing are all important parts of a Childs language development.

It is important to identify any delay in language or communication in a Child as soon as possible. Children need to be able to communicate with others in order to express their needs and develop their social skills. Delayed language or communication can have a big impact on all other areas of development and cause behavioural problems for the child born from frustration. A child who is unable to express themselves clearly may display disruptive or aggressive behaviour as they become frustrated that they are not being understood.

They might be disciplined for their behaviour if their carer does not realise why they are acting up and brands them as a difficult child. This will cause the child to loose confidence and develop low self esteem. They may also become clingy to their parent or carer, be prone to tearful outbursts and have difficulty socialising with peers. A child with hearing difficulties may appear to be in their own little world and not respond when their name is called. They may also struggle to follow simple instructions or have trouble pronouncing words.

Children who can not understand or hear what is being said to them will miss out on vital learning opportunities. The Childs overall wellbeing will suffer as they will feel isolated and upset. The child may withdraw from groups and not want to participate therefore missing out on learning important social skills. Delayed language and communication can also be a sign that there is something more seriously wrong with the child that may require treatment or specialist help such as a hearing impairment or learning difficulties.

If the correct help or treatment is not supplied for the child in a timely fashion it will have a knock on effect that will delay their emotional, social and even physical development. It is therefore vitally important that child care practitioners are aware of the signs of communication and language delay in children and are equipped with the right tools and information to be able to help the children and their families. The practitioner needs to be calm, flexible and patient.

A child with language difficulties will need extra support that should be tailored to their individual needs and plenty of positive encouragement and reinforcement to help build their confidence. The child may be able to take you to objects that they want or express their need by looking or pointing at objects. Some children may need help when playing alongside others. The Practitioner may need to stay close so that they can help them when they have trouble expressing themselves as well as teaching the children around them to be patient and help them to understand the child.

A Childs language could be delayed for many reasons some of these reasons are detailed below: * Hearing impairments - This is a common reason for a

delay in language development. There are many different types of impairments ranging from non-permanent conditions such as glue ear to permanent partial or full hearing loss. A child with hearing loss will often withdraw in to themselves and not want to interact with the outside world as they struggle to understand it. The cause of the loss needs to be established quickly so the child can receive the right treatment so their development does not suffer.

Non-permanent conditions may be easily treated by a GP, whereas permanent conditions may require specialist help and hearing aids. The sooner treatment is supplied for a child the sooner they can progress their language and communication skills. The practitioner can support them within the setting by working alongside the parents to understand the condition. The practitioner should provide one to one support and they may use sign language and encourage the other children to use it too. Physical conditions such as an enlarged tongue or a cleft palate - A child suffering from this kind of physical impairment will usually have a very good understanding of what is being said to them and going on around them. The problem comes when they try to express themselves through speech. They may be unable to speak clearly and may mispronounce words. This will cause them to become frustrated and may result in aggressive behaviour. It might also cause them to feel different and be embarrassed in front of their peers.

Therefore they may withdraw from groups and not wish to participate in discussions. Some of these conditions can be treated by Doctors but others will require speech therapy and on-going support. The practitioner will need

to work alongside the therapist and the parents in order to provide the best possible support for the child within the setting. * Stutters or stammers - A child suffering with a stutter or a stammer will usually have a good understanding of what is being said to them and going on around them.

They struggle to express themselves clearly and find it difficult to get the words they want to say out correctly. They may hesitate or say um a lot or repeat the same word over as they try to get out a sentence. This is often because their mind is working so quickly their mouth struggles to keep up! This is considered a normal stage in development for a child between the age of Most children grow out of this in time but for some it may develop in to a habit and a half to five years..

If a child is suffering with a stutter or stammer displays disruptive behaviour due to frustration and feels embarrassed in front of peers so they shy away from group activities or the non-fluency continues for more than 6 months they may require referral to a speech therapist. Practitioners can help the child within the setting by helping to relax the child in order to calm their speech by showing they are listening, making eye contact, nodding their head and smiling at the child. The practitioner should never finish the Childs sentences be patient and allow them plenty of time to speak. Lack of stimulation and language input -Some children to not recieve the level of interaction required with other people to allow there language and communication skills to develop. The child may be left on their own, for long periods and not taken out of the house. Their carer may not talk or interact with them unless it is necessary. In these circumstances the child misses out

on all the important experiences and interactions that are required in order to enable their language and communication skills to develop. There are often underlying problems or concerns with children who are delayed due to this issue.

There could be a problem with neglect at home or their carer may be depressed and need help. It is important that these issues are also addressed alongside the support required to assist their language development. Often these children simply require time, care and attention in order to help them progress. The practitioner can help by spending time with the child talking and interacting. They must provide plenty of positive reinforcement and encourage them to interact with others and try new experiences to develop their language skills.

Picture cards and books can also be used to help them express what their needs and increase their vocabulary. * Shyness - Some children are simply very shy and do not like talking to people they are not familiar with or clam up in situations or places they are not used to. They have a very good understanding of what is being said to them and going on around them but find it difficult to speak due to shyness and anxiety. The parents may tell you that the child is a chatter box at home where they feel comfortable but the child may not say anything when they are at pre-school.

The child will need plenty of encouragement and positive reinforcement from the practitioner in order to help them settle and feel at ease within the setting. The practitioner can support the child by playing alongside them, encouraging them to interact with other children and encouraging other

children to interact with them. * The child is learning more than one language - Children who are learning more than one language may be slightly slower in learning to talk and communicate. This is because the child has to learn more than one language system.

There are many circumstances in today's society where this is now the case. Children come from many different backgrounds. The child's parents may speak one language at home such as Chinese which will be the child's home language but then they will be exposed to English when they are at preschool or the child's parents may use 2 languages at home. The child's mother might be French and speak French to the child whereas the father may be English and only communicate with the mother and child in English.

Children learn through association and absorption therefore it is important that when within the preschool setting the practitioners only use one language to communicate with the child. This enables the child to associate that language with the setting and put what they are learning in to context. It is very important that the setting works with the child's parents to support their learning and ensure that the child has a positive view of both of the languages they are learning. The parents might like to be involved in some of the activities in the setting so that they can see what the child is learning and help to support their development. Learning difficulties such as Autism - There are many different learning difficulties that can occur in children and all will need specialist treatment that is specific to each individual child.

Therefore it is important that they are identified early so that the child can receive the help and support they require in order to progress. Early signs of

a learning disorder in children are problems pronouncing words, struggling to find the right word, difficulty rhyming, trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, colours, shapes and days of the week and find it difficult to follow directions or learn routines.

Children with autism may have trouble making eye contact, appear disinterested in other people and what is going on around them, find it difficult connecting with people and have problems playing with other children. They may use an abnormal tone of voice, with an odd rhythm or pitch, they may repeat the same words over and over, respond to a question by repeating it instead of answering it and refer to themselves in the third person. Once a delay in a child communication and language skills has been identified it is important they receive the help and support required as soon as possible.

Each setting should have access to a SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) and a EYAT (early years advisory teacher). They should be the first people to be that is contacted once a delay has been identified. They can then come in and carry out observations and assessments of the child in order to help establish the cause of the delay. They can then liaise with the Child's parents and the practitioner to discuss what the next steps are and how best to support the child with their development. A referral should be considered if the child is delayed in any of the following areas: *

Understanding language that is spoken to them
Developing the range of speech sounds appropriate for their age
* Developing the use of words and sentences appropriate for their age
A referral should also be considered for

those children that who are not following the normal patterns of development such as: * Children who use language inappropriately , for example phrases used in the wrong context or that don't make sense. * Repeating learned chunks of language that have no meaning * Children who find it difficult to follow rules or join in with a conversation by looking, taking turns and sharing interest in a subject.

Some children may need to be referred to a speech and language therapist. A speech therapist can help support children with a wide range of communication and language difficulties. Any referrals must be done with the full support and co-operation of parents. The SENCO will also be able to get help from the Early Years support team within Leicestershire. They are there to assist settings with the early identification of children with additional needs and provide support for the child and their families. Once again any referrals must be done with the full support and co-operation of the the parents.

Practitioners should ensure that they include communication and language development within their planning for the setting. The setting should promote good communication and language skills and display their approach to parents so they can help support it within the homeenvironment. There are many ways to promote good communication and language within the setting. All areas within the setting should be clearly labelled with words and pictures to help the children to understand what they are used for. Boxes within the setting should be labelled with pictures to help the child understand what is in them.

Eg. A photo of lego on the box that contains the lego. Pictures and photo cards can also be used to help the children express their needs or to show you what they would like to do. Practitioners should be good role models for the children and ensure that they display good language and communication skills. They should ensure that they listen to the children patiently allowing them time to talk, make good eye contact and sensitively correct children when they use the wrong form of word. Eg " I readed my book" response from practitioner " Oh, you are reading your book".

Practitioners should ensure they use simple instructions with short sentences that the children can understand. Open questions encourage the children to think and with encouragement help them to extend their vocabulary and improve their sentence structure. There are many play opportunities that the practitioner can use to encourage good language and communication. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to talk aloud as you are playing with the children and provide a commentary on what you are doing. For example if you are playing with the lego you could say " We are building our tower up, it is getting higher and higher.

Oh look the green block is on top. Ben has a square brick , it is red" As you are talking the child will learn from absorption pick up on the words and make the associations with the objects. Books can play a key part in developing in speech and communication skills. Picture books can be used to help the child learn colours, animals, and objects. Storybooks can be used to encourage language development and sentence structure. The practitioner

can ask the child open questions such as “ What is happening in the picture? ” or “ What do you think happened next? ”.

You could even get the child to tell you the story themselves. After reading the story with the child you could then ask them to read the story to you. Although they might not be able to read the words you can see how much they recall from the pictures and how well they listened to you. Roleplay is a brilliant way to encourage imaginative play and increase vocabulary. For instance you could role play a trip to the shops. There could be lots of new language words that you can introduce such as till, basket, shopping trolley, carrots, apples, broccoli, oranges, money, purse, bags etc.

Role play is also a good way to get children to interact and communicate with each other in a fun and interesting way. Songs and rhyming are great way for getting children to listen they are also often help children to remember things. Songs and rhymes use intonation, stress and rhythm which all help with aspects of speech development as they are all skills we use when talking. Some songs also involve actions so they are a great way to help children link words with actions or even body parts Eg The song ‘ Head shoulders knees and toes’.

It is important to remember that all children are individuals and therefore what works for one child may not work for another. That is why practitioners must ensure that there is a wide variety of play opportunities available within the setting to ensure they can cater for each child's needs. They should ensure that regular language and communication observations and assessments are carried out on all the children within to enable them to keep

track of their development, plan their next steps and identify and signs of a delay as early as possible.