



Expressive language disorders in children

What is expressive language disorder?

Expressive language refers to putting words together to form thoughts or express one's self. An expressive language disorder occurs when a person has trouble expressing one's self and using language to communicate.

What causes expressive language disorder?

There is no known cause of developmental expressive language disorder. Research is ongoing to determine which biological or environmental factors may be the cause.

Expressive language delays may be associated with conditions such as autism, autism spectrum disorder, specific language impairment, pervasive developmental disorder, or developmental delay.

Acquired expressive language disorder is caused by damage to the brain. Damage can be sustained from a stroke, a traumatic head injury, seizures or other medical conditions. How a person is affected depends on which part of the brain is injured and how badly it is damaged.

How do I know if my child has an expressive language disorder?

Signs and symptoms vary from child to child. The child may have problems putting sentences together, using proper grammar, recalling the appropriate word, or similar problems.

A child with an expressive language disorder is not able to communicate thoughts, needs, or wants at the same level as his or her peers. The child often has a smaller vocabulary than his or her peers.

In many cases these children do understand what they are trying to express. They just cannot create the appropriate sentences to express their thoughts. Other signs may include:

- frequently grasping for the right word
- using the wrong words in speech
- making grammatical mistakes
- relying on short, simple sentence construction

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- relying on stock standard phrases
- inability to ‘come to the point’ of what they’re trying to say
- problems with retelling a story or relaying information
- inability to start or hold a conversation.

What do I do if my child has expressive language delays?

If you suspect your child may have an expressive language delay, contact your pediatrician and share your concerns. Your pediatrician can provide you with a referral to a speech-language pathologist to evaluate your child’s speech.

What is the prognosis for expressive language delays?

The prognosis for every child is different depending on a variety of factors, including:

- severity of the disorder
- cause of the disorder
- age at intervention
- the child’s response to treatment
- his/her external support system (parents, school, etc.)

Will expressive language delays impact my child’s learning or academics?

Depending on the severity of your child’s expressive language delay, his or her ability to communicate thoughts and ideas may be affected. A child who has problems in the area of expressive language may struggle to effectively interact and relay information to peers and teachers.

How Courage Kenny Kids therapists can help

In speech therapy, our clinicians will use specialized techniques, structured play activities and games to address your child’s individual needs. We will practice sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar and social language. These skills will help develop functional communication. This communication may be either verbal, using gestures or signs, or low and/or high technology.

Source: Courage Kenny Kids

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