

## **PEDIATRICS: Language**

### **Guidelines for Referral to Speech-Language Pathologists**

#### **Most Common Etiologies:**

- Developmental delay
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Hearing loss

#### **Related Terms:**

Agnosia, aphasia, apraxia of speech, babbling, developmental delay, echolalia, emotional lability, hemiparesis, hemiplegia, jargon, learning disabilities, paraphasia, perseveration, pragmatics, vocalization.

#### **Potential Consequences:**

- Difficulty in communicating basic needs (i.e., safety, pain, toileting hunger/thirst).
- Difficulty participation in exchange of routine information (i.e. following directions, stating preferences).
- Difficulty functioning at level of independence expected for age (i.e., homework, household chores).
- Difficulty engaging in social interactions; at risk for frustration or depression.
- Difficulty meeting educational potentials, or loss of previous academic status.
- At risk for personal injury due to communication limitations.

#### **Behaviors That Should Trigger an SLP Referral:**

##### ***Receptive Language: (Comprehension)***

###### **By 6 months does not:**

- Notice/startle to loud sounds.
- Look at the person speaking to them.

###### **By 12 months does not:**

- Respond to music and/or singing.
- Understand simple questions.
- Look at familiar people when named.
- Maintain eye contact and/or attention to speaker.

###### **By 2 years does not:**

- Identify basic body parts.
- Understand simple commands like “give me” without gestures.
- Demonstrate action words (i.e., eat).

###### **By 4 years does not:**

- Understand comparisons
- Make inferences

###### **By 5 years does not:**

- Understand complex directions.

- Understand basic concepts.

**School-Age Receptive Language/Learning:**

- Exhibits difficulties understanding teacher's instructions and class discussion; following directions/rules; comprehending conversation and/or movies; differentiating between sounds and/or words and relating them to meaningful information.
- Exhibits difficulty in reading comprehension across subjects, particularly abstract material with complex grammatical structure, and technical vocabulary; differentiating between letters and/or words and learning the meaning of visual symbols.
- Exhibits difficulty in mathematical reasoning, learning numbers, and/or understanding numerical concepts and applications.

**Receptive Language with Recent Decline in Function:**

- Exhibits sudden or significant gradual loss in abilities to understand and/or respond to oral and/or written language; may range from difficulty attending to speaker to responding to abstract, conceptual information.
- Exhibits fluctuations in ability to understand and/or respond to language (i.e., 3-year-old may respond to simple questions most of the time, but has difficulty during recurring periods of days or weeks.)

**Expressive Language:**

***By 6 months does not:***

- Laugh
- Vocalize when talked to
- Initiate vocalization when with others or alone.

***By 12 months does not:***

- Say "mama" or "dada"
- Begin to imitate words.
- Say 1-2 words independently.

***By 2 years does not:***

- Respond to hello and/or bye-bye consistently.
- Use short sentences (i.e., "Daddy go bye-bye").
- Name one color.

***By 3 years does not:***

- Relate experiences verbally.
- State own first and last names
- Count to three

***By 4 years does not:***

- Use complex sentences.
- Explain how to do something.
- Respond to "why" questions with a reason.

***School-Age:***

- Difficulty learning appropriate word production and usage, relationships of words, phrases, sentences to express needs/desires; may result in frustration or embarrassment.
- Difficulty with expression affects interactions with peers.

- Intent in communication often misunderstood
- Odd/unusual language:
  - o Echolalia.
  - o Delayed or not response to others
  - o Difficulty using pronouns appropriately.
  - o Sounds that are not true words.
  - o Immature or inappropriate language in comparison to peers.
  - o One-sided conversations with others.
  - o Social isolation/severely reduced interest in communication.

***Expressive Language/Learning:***

- o Difficulty in oral expression, including appropriate use of words, grammar, and underlying meaning of words to report information, express ideas, and draw conclusions and/or inferences. Usually affects social communication, particularly the ability to effectively explain situations and experiences.
- o Difficulty in written expression, including appropriate letter formation, word selection, spelling, grammar, and meaningful sentence paragraph use to complete schoolwork.
- o Difficulty in basic reading skills, including the ability to decode letters and words to attain information; to draw inferences conclusions and make associations for all subjects in school, and socially in the home and community.
- o Difficulty with mathematical calculations, including mathematical reasoning to perform mathematical applications and equations; activities involving money management, measurement and projections, and/or calculations of time.

***Expressive Language with Recent Decline in Function:***

- o Sudden loss or significant gradual loss in production of spoken and/or written language; may range from difficulty vocalizing to speaking and/or writing in most challenging class.