

Delays & Disorders Explained – Expressive Language Delay –

A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS



WHAT IS EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DELAY?

Expressive language delay is characterized by difficulties using words to express thoughts and ideas. It is the ‘output’ of language that is a challenge.

This can be a source of frustration and lead to behavioural concerns as a result of not being able to have needs and wants met because they cannot be expressed effectively.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS?

For parents, it is important to recognize that expressive language development can vary widely among children and should not be compared across peers and siblings.

Signs of expressive language delay in a child may include:

- A limited vocabulary.
- Difficulty forming sentences.
- Struggling to convey their thoughts, needs, or feelings verbally.
- Trouble finding the right words.
- Frequently using simple or incomplete sentences.
- Omitting important details when trying to communicate.
- Challenges engaging in meaningful conversations or sharing experiences effectively.
- Difficulty sequencing or retelling events or ideas.

Early intervention is crucial in addressing expressive language delay. Parents can seek the guidance of **Speech-Language Pathologists** who have experience in working with children. These professionals will assess the child's language abilities and provide tailored therapy.

WHAT DOES THERAPY FOR EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DELAY INVOLVE?

Therapy for Expressive Language Delay often involves:

- Activities and exercises designed to improve vocabulary.
- Sentence structure.
- Overall communication skills.
- Turn-taking and social interactions.
- Making requests.
- Formulating questions.
- Engaging in tasks with others.

WHAT CAN BE PRACTICED AT HOME?

Parents can actively participate in therapy by practicing therapy exercises at home and encouraging their child to communicate.

It is important for parents to be **patient** and **supportive**, as progress in expressive language development may take time. **Celebrating small milestones** and maintaining **consistency** in therapy and at home can boost the child's confidence and motivation to communicate effectively.

Remember that every child is unique, and expressive language development can be influenced by various factors. Seeking professional evaluation and intervention early can make a significant difference in helping a child catch up with their peers and develop strong communication skills. Parents should trust their instincts and seek guidance if they have concerns about their child's expressive language development.

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