

Common Speech Disorders in Children



When children struggle with speech, it can be concerning for parents and caregivers. Recognizing the signs of speech disorders and knowing when to seek help is crucial for supporting a child's language development. Pediatric speech therapy with a licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP) can effectively assist children in overcoming communication challenges.

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	Signs	Therapeutic Intervention
Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)	Inconsistent speech errors, difficulty imitating sounds, and struggles with longer words	Repetitive practice of speech movements using visual, tactile, and auditory cues
Articulation Disorders	Substituting, omitting, or distorting sounds (e.g., saying "wabbit" for "rabbit")	Sound repetition and modeling to improve clarity
Phonological Disorders	Patterns of sound errors (e.g., replacing "k" sounds with "t" sounds)	Teaching sound contrasts and how sound affects word meaning
Stuttering (Fluency Disorders)	Repeating sounds, prolonging sounds, or silent blocks	Techniques for controlling speech flow and reducing anxiety
Receptive & Expressive Language Disorders	Difficulty following directions, limited vocabulary, or trouble retelling stories	Activities that include following directions, identifying objects, or understanding stories
Voice Disorders	Hoarseness, breathiness, or voice strain	Vocal hygiene techniques and improving voice quality

When to Seek Help

- By 12 months:** Lack of babbling or gestures
- By 18 months:** No words or very limited vocabulary
- By 2 years:** Difficulty combining words
- By 3 years:** Speech is hard for strangers to understand
- By 4-5 years:** Persistent speech errors or difficulty with sentences

How Speech Therapy Can Help

Speech therapy involves assessing specific needs and creating tailored plans to improve communication skills. Sessions often include play-based activities to engage children while focusing on therapy goals. Caregivers play an essential role by supporting their child's development at home.