

Correcting Speech

The child with dyspraxia is not lazy. It is very important for parents and Speech Therapists to emphasise this fact to all the people who come into contact with the child.

The children are often able to say single words correctly, but not in conversation. Also, they may produce a particular word correctly on one occasion, but this might not mean they have fully mastered the sound combinations within the word therefore their production may vary from day to day.

It is important that you do not correct your child's speech unless you have discussed this with your Speech Therapist – they will tell you when to correct your child's speech and when not to. The parents who are working closely with the Speech Therapist are best placed to correct their child's speech, rather than other adults involved with the child. All adults whether at home or school, will need to be patient with the child's efforts.

School

Some children with dyspraxia may show extra difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. Hence children with dyspraxia should be carefully watched for their first years at school so that if necessary, remedial help can be given.

Questions

It is important that you understand your child's speech problem so please do not hesitate to ask your Speech Therapist, if you have any questions. You may also find that talking to other parents is helpful.

Therapist.....

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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

VERBAL DYSPRAXIA INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

1. What is Dyspraxia?

The word “dyspraxia” means difficulty with learned patterns of movement. Children with verbal dyspraxia have difficulty in making and co-ordinating the precise movements of the speech muscles necessary for clear speech. There is no damage to muscles or nerves. Dyspraxia is one type of **speech** problem.

The speech muscles include:

- The lips
- The tongue
- The soft palate – the muscle at the back of the mouth which closes off the nasal passage for the blowing, sucking, swallowing and for speaking
- The larynx – the voice box
- The muscles which control breathing for speech

The children may show one or more of the following characteristics:

- I. Difficulty in making the speech sounds
- II. Difficulty in sequencing sounds to make up a word
- III. Difficulty in keeping speech clear in sentences, (single words may be pronounced correctly but long sentences may be difficult to understand)
- IV. Difficulty in controlling the speed, rhythm and loudness of speech
- V. Difficulty controlling intonation in voice (may sound monotone) and in keeping good voice quality

Dyspraxia and Speech Therapy

The most important aspect of speech therapy for children with dyspraxia is **practice** and **repetition** of the work **daily**. This is why parents and Speech Therapists need to work as a team, with the parents and child continuing the exercises at home **every day**.

Following assessment, speech therapy may be based on the following areas:

- I. Improving the movements of the mouth
- II. Helping the child to make single sounds
- III. Improving ability to repeat sounds and swap from one sound to another
- IV. Helping the child to use these sounds in words
- V. Building up from words to sentences

What is the cause of Verbal Dyspraxia?

At present we do not know the cause of verbal dyspraxia. There often seems to be a family tendency towards speech and language problems. Between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the children with a speech dyspraxia have a relative who has shown some type of speech or language problem. Brothers and sisters **may** have speech and language problems **or** their speech and language may develop normally.

What will progress be like?

It is very difficult to know what the rate of progress will be. Children with dyspraxia find speech work difficult and progress will be slow, probably taking years rather than months, though this depends on the severity of the problem and the amount of work that can be continued at home. We expect steady progress to be made so that most children should end up with clear intelligible speech.