

Childhood Aphasia

Quick Facts

- Occurs when the language centers of the brain are damaged
- May result from: stroke; syndrome that affect the brain (e.g., Landau-Kleffner syndrome); traumatic brain injury; or brain tumor
- If caused by stroke, the stroke may occur in utero, perinatally (during or within the first month after birth), or any time throughout childhood
- Occurs more in boys than girls

Implications for Language and Communication

- In child who has acquired language, stroke affecting language areas may cause aphasia
- In child who has not yet acquired language, stroke in either brain hemisphere typically causes language delay
- Children's language outcomes are better if the stroke occurs earlier than later in childhood

Symptoms Manifested in Language

- Trouble finding words
- Getting stuck on a word and repeating it multiple times
- Mixing up letters in a word (e.g., “vlat” or “flat”)
- Substituting words (e.g., calling a computer a “TV”)
- Mutism, especially in the period immediately after the brain damage
- Trouble initiating speech
- Problems with grammar and syntax
- Difficulty with reading and writing
- Trouble with comprehension



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For online support groups, visit:

www.KidsHaveStrokes.org
www.PediatricStrokeHope.org
www.HemiKids.org

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Speech-Language Therapy for Children with Aphasia

- Speech-language therapist work on expressive, receptive, and nonverbal communication
- Therapy targets and goals include:
 - *Communication strategies*, which help create meaningful interactions between child and his or her parent, teacher, friend, etc.
 - *Word finding skills*
 - *Grammar and syntax*
 - *Literacy* (reading and writing)
 - *Listening and comprehension*
 - *Pragmatics and social communication*
- Augmentative and alternative communication systems may be utilized

Ways to Help Children with Aphasia in the Classroom

- Be patient.
- Provide adequate time for child to attempt and fix his or her words.
- Provide a hint when he or she seems stuck and could use help.
 - *For example*, if a child is trying to think of the word “dog,” you can hint at the word by making the “d” sound. Continue to build on the hint by giving the next sound in the word if the child needs it.
- Provide images or letters for you and the child to point at while communicating.
- Use gestures and encourage gestures from the child.
- Ask the child to draw what they are having trouble saying.



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For more information, visit:

www.asha.org
www.aphasia.org