

## Speech-Language Delays, Family Education

Speech is how we say sounds and words. Language is the words we use to share ideas and get what we want and involves many ways of communicating beyond just speech, such as sign language and writing (for older children). Children learn language in the same way, but not always at the same time.

Some children talk early and understand everything you say. Others do not talk much or have trouble listening. Children can have speech or language problems before they start school. A language delay is when a child is behind in gaining language skills compared to their age and the skills of other children their exact same age (peers). A young child with a language delay may exhibit a slower start to their language skills, slower progress through learning language, slower order in which their language skills are learned, or all of the above. Children can have trouble understanding language and speech, which is referred to as a receptive delay. They can have trouble with speaking, which is referred to as an expressive delay. Some children are behind in both skills (mixed receptive-expressive language delay).

Learning a second language does not cause language problems. Children all over the world learn to speak other languages. Speak to your child in the language that you know best. Your child will have problems in both languages if they have a language disorder.

Some children do continue to demonstrate ongoing difficulties gaining and using language skills that are below their age expectations by preschool or school age that cannot be explained by other factors. They go on to receive a new diagnosis of specific language impairment (language disorder).

So, let's review some options for addressing language delays and disorders. Interventions may take on several forms, such as:

### Indirect treatment and monitoring

- Provide activities for parents and caregivers to engage in with the child, such as book-sharing and parent-child interaction groups.
- Check in with the family periodically to monitor language development.

### Direct intervention, including techniques such as:

- Expansions—repeating the child's words and adding details.
- Build-ups and breakdowns—the child's utterance is expanded (built up) and then broken down into grammatical components (break down) and then built up again into its expanded form.

Supports are child specific and based on the child's current level of language skill, strengths and weaknesses, and functioning in related areas, like hearing. Intervention works to support language development and teach skills to increase Total Communication with words and other means such as sign language.



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<https://www.wakehealth.edu/Specialty/p/Pediatric-Development-and-Behavior>

For more information, you can check out:

Brenner Children's Speech Language Department: <https://www.wakehealth.edu/Specialty/p/Pediatric-Speech-Language-Pathology>

CDC's Developmental Milestones: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Download the FREE tracker app (English or Spanish): <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>

Preschool language disorders from ASHA: <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/preschool-language-disorders/>