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URL of this page: //medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001544.htm

Developmental expressive language disorder

Developmental expressive language disorder is a condition in which a child has lower than normal ability in vocabulary, saying complex sentences, and remembering words. However, a child with this disorder may have the normal language skills needed to understand verbal or written communication.

Causes

Developmental expressive language disorder is common in school-age children.

The causes are not well understood. Damage to the cerebrum of the brain and malnutrition may cause some cases. Genetic factors may also be involved.

Symptoms

Children with an expressive language disorder have a hard time getting their meaning or message across to others.

Symptoms of this disorder may include any of the following:

- Below-average vocabulary skills
- Improper use of tenses (past, present, future)
- Problems making complex sentences
- Problems remembering words

Exams and Tests

Standardized expressive language and nonverbal intellectual tests should be conducted if an expressive language disorder is suspected. Testing for other learning disabilities may also be needed.

Treatment

Language therapy is the best method to treat this type of disorder. The goal is to increase the number of phrases a child can use. This is done by using block-building techniques and speech therapy.

Outlook (Prognosis)

How much the child recovers depends on the severity of the disorder. With reversible factors, such as vitamin deficiencies, there may be nearly full recovery.

Children who do not have any other developmental or motor coordination problems have the best outlook (prognosis). Often, such children have a family history of delays in language milestones, but eventually catch up.

Possible Complications

This disorder may lead to:

- Learning problems
- Low self-esteem
- Social problems

When to Contact a Medical Professional

If you are concerned about your child's language development, have them tested.

Prevention

Good nutrition during pregnancy, and early childhood and prenatal care may help.

Alternative Names

Language disorder - expressive; Specific language impairment

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Review Date 4/17/2024

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