

DEVELOPMENTAL APRAXIA OF SPEECH

WHAT IS CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH?

Apraxia is a motor speech disorder where children have problems saying sounds, syllables and words. It is not due to muscle weakness or paralysis. The brain has problems planning to move the body parts needed for speech (i.e. lips, jaw, tongue). The child knows what he/she wants to say, but his/her brain has difficulty coordinating the muscle movements necessary to say those words.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF APRAXIA

Signs and Symptoms may vary from child to child. It is important to have your child evaluated by a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) who has knowledge of childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) to rule out other causes of speech problems. General things to look for include: inconsistent errors, problem combining sounds, and more difficulty saying longer words or phrases clearly than shorter ones.

WHAT CAUSES APRAXIA?

In most cases of CAS, the cause is unknown. Some possible causes include: genetic disorders, syndromes, stroke or brain injury.

It is important to note that while CAS may be referred to as “developmental apraxia”, it is not a disorder that children simply “outgrow”. Many children with developmental speech disorders develop speech sounds in the typical order, just at a slower pace. Children with apraxia do not follow the typical pattern of speech sound development and will not make progress without treatment. There is no cure, but with appropriate, intensive intervention, significant progress can be made.

TREATMENT

Treatment focuses on improving the planning, sequencing and coordination of muscle movements for speech. Research shows that intensive therapy is most effective for children with CAS. Speech is improved by giving feedback from a number of senses, such as tactile “touch” cues, visual and auditory cues. ‘PROMPT’ is a leading therapy technique for children with CAS and many of the speech-language pathologists at Moss, Rowden, Freigang and Associates are trained in PROMPT.

Contact us to see how we may be able to assist you with your concerns.