

UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH FOR Classroom Teachers

Childhood Apraxia of Speech is a motor speech disorder that first becomes apparent as a young child is learning speech. Children with apraxia have great difficulty planning and the precise, highly refined and specific series of movements of the tongue, lips, jaw and palate that are necessary for intelligible speech.

APRAXIA AT A GLANCE...

- Childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) makes it difficult or impossible for children to produce sounds, syllables or words.
- Most notably, children with apraxia have speech that is difficult to understand. Younger children or more severely affected children may have almost no intelligible speech.
- Children with CAS typically understand language much better than they can express it.
- Apraxia can range from severe to mild and anywhere in between.
- CAS is a rare and severe speech disorder that places affected children at risk for other language, learning, and social difficulties.
- Children with CAS can develop intelligible speech if they receive early, appropriate, and frequent speech therapy, some children progress to the extent that others may not even realize they once had a severe speech problem.

HOW TO HELP in the CLASSROOM

- Consult with the parents or caregivers and find out strategies that motivate or engage the child to take communication risks, as well as approaches that do not work for the individual student.
- Meet with the schools SLP to problem-solve how to provide adaptations for the child's inability to communicate clearly.
- Ask the student to repeat their statement or question. Let the student know what they have to say is important to you but do not put them on the "spot".
- Summarize the student's message, as doing so can help the student know that you understood them.
- Increase wait time and allow the student time to think about what they want to say and how they will say it. Do not interrupt the child or hurry them along.
- Assume that reluctance to do a task may be an indicator that the student is not capable of completing it as is and the task may need adapted.
- Help build connections between the student and their peers so that they are included in games or play.
- Educate others in the classroom about speech disorders and apraxia.
- Encourage and praise the child for their effort and resilience, if not for speech accuracy.
- Consider ways that this child can shine in the classroom and demonstrate their special talents or abilities to peers.

Because of their communication disability, children with apraxia are at high risk of becoming passive observers and classroom bystanders. Effective and compassionate educators can help these students become involved, active, and enthused learners instead!

Imagine being stuck in a world where you can understand perfectly well, but you don't have the voice to communicate. Be the voice for those without one. Speak out for Apraxia Awareness!

Apraxia-KIDS.org



CLASSROOM IMPACT...

Your student with apraxia of speech may have difficulty:

- Speaking on demand.
- Being understood by peers and adults in the classroom.
- Participating in classroom discussion, or giving classroom presentation.
- Demonstrating what he/she is learning via assessments that require a verbal response.
- Gaining attention of peers or adults in the classroom.
- Explaining personal needs or upsets or defending oneself from bullying by peers.
- Using appropriate language structures such as plurals, pronouns, verb forms, word endings, ect.
- Learning literacy related skills because they often depend on intact speech processing systems.

Join us on Facebook @ Boise Friends with Apraxia

Information from "AN INTRODUCTION TO CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH FOR Classroom Teachers".
Reprinted with permission by CASANA.