



Red flags to help identify children with communication delays



General areas of impact may include

- listening skills
- language comprehension e.g. ability to follow directions in the classroom
 - language use (vocabulary, words, sentences)
 - clarity of speech
 - social interactions
 - literacy abilities
 - numeracy

Some red flags of a child struggling with communication difficulties

- Naughty behaviour (avoiding or refusing to participate, distracting others, off-task)
- Difficulties with transitions or change
- Poor memory and organization (lose items, lose track of tasks)
- Reading /writing/ spelling difficulties
- Non-specific language e.g. the child says, 'that' 'this' 'there'
- Child is difficult to understand
- Struggles to answer questions in class
- Limited friendships/ spends lots of time alone
- Very quiet and hardly noticed by the class teacher
- Signs of anxiety, fear, aggression or frustration
- Parents say, 'There is just something wrong'.





Specific areas of need

Receptive Language (Comprehension)



- Limited word knowledge (*the labels we know for things*)
- Inability to follow longer verbal sentences
- Difficulty understanding different functions of language (*questions, statements, commands*)
- Misunderstanding of grammar (*e.g. word endings, verb tenses*)
- Difficulties following Instructions especially longer instructions.
- Learning/understanding vocabulary –
 - Topic work etc
 - Concepts, including math concepts e.g. smaller/bigger, more/less
- Inferencing- using knowledge of the world to infer meaning from what is given.

Expressive language

- Incorrect word order (syntax) “kicked boy... that ball”
- Delayed use of grammar e.g. past tense, plurals, pronouns etc: “cat is like to eat mouses...caught the mouses”
- Word finding difficulties e.g “him doing that. Holding it.... He riding”
- Limited sentence length e.g. “ride horsie”
- Stuttering e.g. ‘The the the horse, or ttttthe horse’
- Poor verbal reasoning e.g. “he’s crying and took his shoe off...doggy’s taken it”
- Difficulties starting/initiating conversations



Social communication

- Difficulties with humour/literal interpretations e.g. “pull your socks up”
- Inability to interpret body language/eye contact e.g. conversation partner breaks eye contact they want to end conversation
- Struggle with unstructured times of school day especially breaks
- Need for routine/structure e.g. become anxious during change, e.g. supply teacher, fire alarm or celebrations e.g. EID.
- Peer relationships may be socially motivated but not know how to ‘get it right’
- Anxiety at times of transition e.g. between classrooms or daily activities



If you have any questions please see your Speech and Language Pathologist in school or contact us at: info@otslp.com or on the contact details below.

