



Is your child FRUSTRATED?

Around the home, frustration can be an unrelenting source of disharmony. When days don't go according to plan, the kids won't do what they're told or you're just finding it hard to be heard, even the happiest of homes can turn into a war zone. Our children can feel frustrated too! One only has to see a toddler throwing a tantrum to know how unpleasant a frustrated child can be. What is it though that causes our children to feel like this? There are several possibilities but one reason could be that your child is having language difficulties.

Language is a very important part of communication. It is different from speech because speech refers to the sounds we make with our mouths to produce words. Language refers to words, grammar and the rules of talking. A child is said to have a language problem if he or she has difficulty learning language and does not have the same language skills as most other children of the same age.

Children with language problems find it hard to understand and use words properly. For example, a four-year-old child with a language problem might use the word 'dog' to refer to any four-legged animal. They can have difficulty understanding sentences and putting words together to form sentences. For example, a four-year-old with a language problem might understand the sentence 'Eat dinner after you wash your hands.' to mean that dinner is to be eaten before I wash my hands. Children with language problems may also have difficulties using language properly in social situations such as day-care, school or even in the family.

When a child has language difficulties, life can be a very frustrating experience from their perspective and yours. They may not be able to tell you what they need or want. Sharing stories with grown-ups can drive them up the wall because it's hard to make themselves understood. Making quips and comments, that make children so delightful, can seem almost impossible. They can test their parent's patience equally because they never seem to do what they are told. However, putting yourself in the shoes of the children, having a language problem would be like being trapped in a country where you don't speak the language well enough to get by.

You can look for signs of a language problem by checking if your child has all of the language skills expected for his or her age (see table below). However, if you feel that you and your child are not communicating well, this is also a sign of a language difficulty.

If your child does not have the language skills listed by the recommended ages contact a speech pathologist and make an appointment for an assessment.

You do not need a referral from a doctor or a teacher. The best person to tell if your child needs a speech pathologist is YOU! However, only a qualified speech pathologist can tell for certain if a child does or doesn't have a language problem.



Here is a brief checklist of language skills and the age at which most children learn them. Your child may have a language problem if he or she lacks any of these skills or achieved them at an older age.

- **0 – 1 month:** Responds to noises and human voices.
- **2 –10 months:** Babbling (cooing)
- **10 – 12 months:** Understands “No”, simple requests and own name. Can say one or two words.
- **13 – 18 months:** Can say about 5-10 words and is making 2 word sentences.
- **19 –24 months:** Can say 50-100 words and understands 300 words.
- **2 – 3 years:** Makes 3- 4 word sentences that can be understood most of the time and able to understand most things said.
- **3- 4 years:** Can have long conversations.
- **4- 5 years:** Can say up to 2000 words and understand up to 2800 words and can make 8 word sentences with correct grammar.

Frustration can have numerous causes. Language difficulties can be a significant factor. By ruling out or solving any language difficulties, with speech pathology, you can help your child to reach his or her potential in our language filled world. Of course, let’s not forget, it may also help create a harmonious home.