Late Talkers: Importance of Identification and Intervention
Rebecca Connor

Abstract

Language difficulties can cause adverse effects on children during their preschool and elementary school years. The language difficulties can then persist well into their adulthood, affecting their overall quality of life.

The information outlined within this poster aids in the understanding of language skills for typically developing children, language skills of children with a Developmental Language Delay (DLD), and the language trajectories of children diagnosed as Late Talkers (LTs).

Late Talkers

- A heterogeneous group ages 18 to 35 months who have an expressive language delay [10]
- The prevalence of children diagnosed is 12.6 percent of the population [1]
- Diagnostic criteria is based on children’s expressive language skills [9]
- Late talkers acquire language at a slower rate than their typically developing peers [4]
- At the age of 5, children diagnosed as late talkers’ language skills can go two different ways (TD-LI)
- Differential diagnosis

Typically Developing Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Expressive Language Skills</th>
<th>Receptive Language Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-8 mos.</td>
<td>Perlocutionary: parents take meaning from children’s sounds</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-12 mos.</td>
<td>Illocutionary intents expressed with gestures and vocalizations. Jargon babble with intonation that is contour of language learned. First 50 words: names of familiar people and objects.</td>
<td>Understands 3-50 words</td>
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<td>12-18 mos.</td>
<td>Average vocabulary size is 50–100 words (CV shape &amp; consonants used in early babbling) at 18 mos. and use of one-word speech. Frequency of words use increases and begin to use two-word utterances. New intents to request information, answer questions, and acknowledge. Average expressive vocabulary is 200-300 words at 24 mos.</td>
<td>Understand “Wh” questions and begins to have rhyme awareness.</td>
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<td>18-24 mos.</td>
<td>Use of “Wh” questions and narratives consisting of labels and descriptions.</td>
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<td>24-30 mos.</td>
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Developmental Language Delay

- Difficulties with comprehension and/or use of spoken and written language [1]
- Difficult to diagnose children with a DLD before the age of 3 [2]
- 3 to 16 percent of children are diagnosed [3]
- Signs and symptoms based on assessment of metacognitive/metalinguistic abilities [2]
- Formal Assessments [6]

Proactive Factors

- Protective factors are environmental changes that increase children’s language skills
- Protective factors include:
  - shared book reading
  - engaging in informal play,
  - children’s time spent in child care centers [7]
  - Promote language-based social interaction with a variety of communication partners [2]

Future Implications

- Continued language difficulties
- Poor academic performance [11]
- Social and behavioral issues [12]

References