



What is Articulation Disorders?

An articulation disorder is a condition that makes it difficult for a person to create the sounds used to speak a language. This disorder can make it difficult for others to understand what that person is trying to say.

What Causes Articulation Disorder?

Hearing loss, hereditary, neurological disorders, improper learning and anatomical deformities of oral structures like cleft lip, tongue tie, etc.

By age 5, most of child's speech should be understood, and by about age 8, children should be able to say all sounds correctly. There are established ages for every sound and by then most children should say all sounds correctly. Mistakes are expected before that age as the child learns the sounds. But if child still cannot correctly produce sounds even after a certain age, the child may be at a risk of developing an articulation disorder.

Basic Characteristics

Children with articulation disorders can be known to do one or more of the following:

- Delete sounds (child says: *bu* instead of *bus*)
- Substitute sounds (child says: *Wed* for *Red*)
- Add sounds (child says: *Dough* for *Dog*)
- Distort sounds (child says *thpoon* for *spoon*)
- Distorting "s" or "r" sounds is also a type of problem.
- Children may simplify clusters (eg: *sing* for *string*)
- Sometimes, child may not understand that changing sounds can change meaning



Diagnosis

To diagnose an articulation disorder, a child will need to see a specialist such as a speech-language pathologist. The pathologist will talk with the child and ask them to say certain words or sentences. The child's speech will be compared to what is expected at their age.

If a child makes more speech mistakes than is expected, they may need speech therapy.

Treatment

Mild speech problems can go away with time. For severe speech problems that occur without any structural abnormality, a child will need to begin speech therapy treatment. Therapy may help a child make the sound by showing them how to use their lips or tongue right. They will be given exercises to help pronounce letters and words.

Speech therapy can be done with just one child and the therapist or by a therapist with a group of kids. In group therapy, all children may do speech exercises together. With treatment; it is possible to improve speech problems. Early treatment helps the most. Many children gain normal or close-to-normal speech with treatment.

Role of Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

SLP gives formal test to check child's ability to say all sounds in different context.

They may check for presence of muscle weakness causing it and based on several tests the SLP will diagnose whether the child has an articulation disorder or not.

SLP will determine the type of therapy the child will need and plan accordingly. SLP will provide feedback to child that makes learning easy. Home training programs will also be given so that parents of the child will have an idea what should be done at home.

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Public Education Pamphlet

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