



Exceptional Therapy for Exceptional Children

Speech therapy is a topic that is brought up consistently and we are asked if this is a service we offer. Applied Behavior Analysis' approach to functional communication is Verbal Behavior (VB). Verbal behavior is the approach we use to address functional communication deficits.

Language Development

Verbal Behavior: used by behavior analyst to treat deficits in functional communication.

Verbal behavior is the functional analysis of language, rooted in the principles of ABA. The analysis is specific to how language develops and the conditions in which certain verbal behaviors occur. Applying the principle of ABA to teaching a child functional communication is the basis of our program. We approach teaching children to communicate through their motivation. We evaluate the things they desire and want and then develop a way for them to access it using the communication form that is best suited for them. Some children are able to talk or make sound approximations while other children may benefit from a sign language or modified sign language program. There are instances when both are combined to assist talker and listener understanding. Each child is individual and after a formal communication assessment has been completed a system for communication will be developed based on the individual needs of each student.

Speech Therapy is used to treat speech disorders and/or language disorders.

A. Speech disorders include:

- **Articulation disorders:** difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that listeners can't understand what's being said.
- **Fluency disorders:** problems such as stuttering, in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions (st-st-stuttering), or prolonging sounds and syllables (sssstuttering).
- **Resonance or voice disorders:** problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of the voice that distract listeners from what's being said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for a child when speaking.
- **Dysphasia/oral feeding disorders:** these include difficulties with drooling, eating, and swallowing.

B. Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive:

- **Receptive disorders:** difficulties understanding or processing language.
- **Expressive disorders:** difficulty stringing words together, limited vocabulary, or inability to use language in a socially appropriate way.

Source: KidsHealth.org

At Applied Behavior Center for Autism we aim to make communication easy and effective. Our efforts are spent identifying the child's specific motivations, capturing and contriving opportunities to build on that motivation and developing efficient ways for them to access preferred items and activities. We differ from the tradition speech therapy approach in several ways and do not isolate their techniques but insist all therapies work together for the best interest of the child.

