

Language and Behaviour

Some children with behaviour problems at school may have underlying speech or language difficulties. Here are some common reasons:

Talking:

- Children who have trouble thinking of what to say or how to say it, may not be able to respond quickly enough when they want to ask a question or make a comment. Other children may interrupt them and even teachers may not wait long enough for them to say what they are trying to say. This can result in anxiety, acting out or even depression.
- Children who know a lot fewer words than others their age can have a hard time explaining their ideas. They may stop trying because it is too difficult.
- Children who can't say a lot of speech sounds may have difficulty making themselves understood. They may become frustrated or they may be teased by others.

Understanding:

- Children who have difficulty understanding words or long sentences may misunderstand directions. They have difficulty figuring out the concepts the teacher is explaining. They often have trouble keeping up with what others are saying so they give up. They sometimes use unacceptable behaviours because they are feeling stressed or bored.
- Some children understand words and even complicated sentences but they don't understand the non-verbal cues that most of us pay attention to. They may have trouble understanding body language, tone of voice or facial expressions. This is called a pragmatic language disorder. These kids have trouble learning social rules and expectations. They may interrupt others or barge into games. They are frequently "in trouble" with their friends and teachers.

If your child shows any of the behaviours described above, there may be an underlying language problem. Talk to your child's teacher about whether a language assessment might be a good idea.

