

HANDY HINTS **1**

Language Development
Recognising a possible
difficulty/impairment
When to be concerned

It can be difficult to tell whether children have a speech and language impairment, as they do not look any different from other children, and their speech is not always obviously unusual. A child with any of the difficulties listed below may have a speech and language impairment, and this possibility should be investigated.

Birth - 1 year

Lack of eye contact.
Little or no babbling.
Failure of child to respond to noise, talk, even though no perceptible hearing difficulties.

1 - 2 years

Little or no development of speech.
Lack of understanding of what is said.
Poor listening skills - seeming not to hear or pay attention.
Lack of normal play for age.

2 - 3 years

Frustration - tantrums.
Very shy.
Lack of eye contact.
Little or no speech.

3 - 5 years

Speaking and playing skills far behind.
Lack of understanding of turn-taking and therefore poor development of social skills.
Poor rhyming skills.
Coordination difficulties eg tying shoe laces.

5 years upwards

Learning difficulties in classroom.
Poor social skills - therefore few friends - loners.
Obvious speaking difficulties may have resolved, but other problems may arise (see below).
Reading difficulties - particularly apparent at 7 years of age.
Emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Difficulties with word games eg "I Spy".