



**Let's
Talk**

Childhood Apraxia of Speech

“When my child, Lilly, was 6 and going into first grade, no one could understand her speech. She used hand movements, sounds, and face movements to explain what she wanted to say. She imitated the sounds but couldn't put them together to make words. Each time she tried to say a word, she said it in a different way. Lilly was getting upset about her problem, and I was worried.”

—Maria

Have You Been Told That Your Child Has Apraxia?

Is your child having trouble talking? You may have been told that she has apraxia (uh-PRAK-see-uh). You also may hear it called childhood apraxia of speech, or CAS.

A child with CAS knows what she wants to say but has trouble saying it. Her brain isn't moving her lips, jaw, and tongue the way they need to move to talk. Children with CAS have trouble planning the movements they need to say sounds and words.

Is It CAS or Something Else?

It can be hard to know if your child has CAS or another type of speech problem. It may take time to figure it out. Some “red flags” for CAS are if your child:

- Says only a few sounds
- Doesn't string sounds together to make words
- Shortens words by leaving out sounds
- Says the same word different ways
- Understands what people are saying much better than he can talk
- Struggles to imitate what others say

Fast facts

- Childhood apraxia of speech can make it hard for your child to speak.
- Your child can learn to speak more clearly.
- A speech-language pathologist, or SLP, can help.



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- Tries hard but cannot always make his mouth say the sound or word he wants
- Is hard for others to understand

Some children with CAS may also have weak muscles in their mouth and face. This is called dysarthria (dis-AR-three-uh). Children with CAS can also have language problems. It is important to find out what is causing your child's speech problems.

How Can a Speech-Language Pathologist Help?

Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, work with children who have CAS. SLPs work in schools, hospitals, and clinics, and can even come to your home. To see if your child has CAS, the SLP may:

- Check the ways your child's lips, jaw, and tongue move
- See if your child can imitate mouth movements
- Ask your child to repeat sounds and words as fast as possible
- Check to see how your child sucks, chews, and swallows
- Listen to how your child says sounds in longer words
- Check how well your child can be understood in conversation
- Give some other tests to understand more about your child's speech and language

The SLP may ask you questions about how your child gets along with others and whether she gets upset when she can't talk. You should have your child's hearing tested, as well. Hearing loss can cause speech and language problems.

What Will the SLP Do With My Child?

Your child's SLP may help your child learn how to:

- Move his lips, jaw, and tongue to make speech sounds
- Say the sounds of the letters of the alphabet
- Put sounds together into words and words into sentences
- Use sign language, pictures, or a computer while he is working on speech



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It can take many months or even years for your child's speech to improve. Ask your SLP for ideas about what you can do at home to help your child.

“The SLP in Lilly's school said that she needed special help. The SLP taught Lilly where sounds are made in her mouth. Lilly practiced saying parts of words and whole words. She could say longer words if they were broken into shorter parts. I practiced with her every night. A year later, Lilly's speech was much clearer. By the fourth grade she sounded just like the other children.”

—Maria

Childhood apraxia of speech can change your child's life. Help is available.

To learn more about childhood apraxia of speech or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call 800-638-8255 or (TTY) 301-296-5650.

My SLP's name is

Appointment

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and

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