

Expressive Language

A child with an acquired brain injury may have difficulty putting words together to convey meaning. This may be a problem in oral and written language output. Children may note difficulties with finding the right word, commonly reported as 'word-finding difficulties'. This does not refer to how the sounds in the words are pronounced or how the child's speech sounds. A more subtle form of this may be referred to as a high-level expressive language difficulty. Factors such as memory, processing speed, attention and executive function will impact on a child's language ability.

What you might see	What this could mean	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child does not participate in class discussion. • Child uses "umm" and "aah" a lot and takes a long time to get meaning across. • Child uses a lot of words to explain one point. • Child does not know how to start a verbal task; e.g. telling news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word finding difficulties. • Difficulty learning new words. • Difficulty recalling specific names of things – tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon. • Difficulty sequencing words or information. • Difficulty remembering grammatical rules, or learning new grammatical forms easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow extra time and give opportunity for the child to attempt to participate in classroom discussion. • Encourage the child to describe or talk around the word to get the meaning across, instead of focusing on recalling the specific name/word. E.g. Can you describe it for me? • Provide written or picture cues to help the child sequence their ideas (e.g. for news time) Use "wh" question as prompts or "beginning, middle, end" in word or symbol and/or picture form. • Try strategies to facilitate new learning of words and grammatical forms e.g. "word banks" or "word books" as a reference. • Pre-teach vocabulary for specific curriculum topics. • Use carrier phrases (such as sentence completion tasks to elicit words). • Pre-warn child that it is going to be their turn to talk / respond and give child more information about what you want them to have an answer; e.g. "<i>Jane, its going to be your turn after Robert. I want you to have a think about WHO the story is about</i>". • Encourage child to jot down key words / ideas of what they want to say while they are waiting for their turn to answer.