

A Guide to Identifying Early Warning Signs of Communication Challenges in Children Ages 4-6



If your child shows these warning signs, or you are concerned about other aspects of your child's speech and language development, contact the school's speech-language pathologist.

Some children have problems with understanding, called **receptive language**.

They may have trouble:

- Following directions
- Answering questions
- Understanding stories
- Following conversations
- Pointing to objects

Some children have problems with talking, called **expressive language**.

They may have trouble:

- Formulating sentences
- Asking questions
- Naming objects
- Telling stories

Additional warning signs of communication challenges:

- Not easily understood by others
- Stuttering
- Trouble interacting with peers and with turn-taking

Tips for Parents

- **Read to your child often.** *Name and point to pictures. Ask questions about the characters and what is happening in the story.*
- **Talk to your child.** *This will help your child learn new words.*
- **Give your child time to answer questions.**
- **Speak to your child in the language you know best.** *Be a good model for language.*

Tips for Teachers

- **Reduce auditory and visual distractions in the classroom**
- **Provide extra response time**
- **Keep directions short and simple**
- **Speak clearly and slowly**
- **Repeat back what the student has said,** *modelling correct pronunciation and sentence structure*
- **Use visuals & graphic organizers**