

How Parents and Professionals Can Help

Children with voice and speech disorders (and hearing problems) can have a difficult time communicating. They may struggle socially and academically, and their well being may also be affected.

Communication disorders are treatable. **Early identification and treatment** by a speech language pathologist (SLP) are critical to optimize communication.

Family members and professionals play important roles in supporting affected individuals.

Helping Children with a Voice Disorder

- Recognize the signs of a voice disorder:
 - Loss of voice
 - Change of pitch
 - Hoarse, raspy or breathy voice
 - Speaking with strain and effort
- Parents and caregivers can:
 - Take the child to see a doctor (such as an Ear, Nose and Throat “ENT” specialist)
 - Remind the child not to shout or scream
 - Ensure that the child drinks water throughout the day
 - Schedule quiet time or voice rest
- Source / More info: identifythesigns.org

Helping Children with a Speech Sound Disorder

- Recognize the signs of a speech sound disorder:
 - Infants – no babbling, or babbling is limited to just a few sounds
 - Age 18 months - 3 years: speech is unclear even to close family members; says early developing sounds, such as p, b, m, h, t, d and w incorrectly. Uses more vowels than consonants.
 - Age 3-4 years: may say k, g, f, t, d, and n incorrectly
 - Age 5-6 years: many sound errors persist and speech is difficult to understand
 - May struggle to speak
 - Difficulty imitating speech
- Parents and caregivers can:
 - Say sounds correctly when they talk to their children
 - Know that it is ok if the child makes some mistakes with sounds
 - Avoid correcting the child’s speech sounds – it is more important to let him/her keep talking.
- Source / More info: identifythesigns.org

Specialists Who Can Help

Audiologists diagnose and treat hearing and balance problems. It is recommended that all children with 22q11.2DS get a hearing test at age one from an audiologist, with routine follow up as needed.

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) treat problems in communication and swallowing. If your child has a speech and/or voice problem, it is strongly recommended that he/she receive help from an SLP as early as possible/as soon as a diagnosis of 22q11.2DS is made.

Professional Management of Speech Issues in Children with 22q11.2DS

The document [Speech-Language Disorders in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome: Best Practices for Diagnosis and Management](#) provides detailed clinical recommendations for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who work with children with 22q11.2DS.

The document is available for free. The appendices outline the best practices for each age group.

How Parents and Professionals Can Help (Continued)

What is Speech Therapy?

Speech therapy is treatment that helps improve a person's ability to make speech sounds and communicate with language.

For example, it addresses:

- Speech sound disorders
- Motor speech disorders
- Resonance disorders
- Fluency disorders
- Receptive language disorders
- Expressive language disorders
- Voice disorders

Surgeries may be needed to fix structural issues such as velopharyngeal deficiency (VPD) or cleft palate



Speech therapy activities can include:

- Learning the place and manner of speech sounds
- Practice sounds over and over until they become consistent and automatic
- Practice gradually progresses from making the sounds alone, in a syllable, a word, a phrase, a sentence, a story and in conversation
- The sound is practiced in all positions in words, such as the beginning of a word, the middle of a word and at the end of a word.
- Specialized techniques are needed to correct compensatory and motor speech disorders
- Oral motor exercises are not effective for improving speech and should be avoided
- Begin direct speech sound intervention early
- Some children will require a frequent and intensive schedule of speech therapy
- A daily home practice program should be an integral part of the therapy process

References / Resources

Clinical practice recommendations / Medical research reports

- [Updated clinical practice recommendations for managing children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome](#) – 2023
- [Updated clinical practice recommendations for managing adults with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome](#) – 2023
- [The Use of Nonspeech Oral Motor Exercises in the Treatment of Children With Cleft Palate](#) – 2020
- [Speech-Language Disorders in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome: Best Practices for Diagnosis and Management](#) – 2019

Websites of medical institutions and societies

- Identifythesigns.org – The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- [Speech therapy](#) – Cleveland Clinic

Graphics: Freepik.com - [Speech therapy](#)



The mission of the [International 22q11.2 Foundation](#) is to improve the quality of life for individuals affected by chromosome 22q11.2 differences through family and professional partnerships. This information is brought to you by the Foundation for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be taken as medical advice. If you have concerns, please talk to your healthcare provider.