

WEBINAR REPORT

SPEECH THERAPY

DR. JACOB PAPPEN



The difficulties that occur with conversations and interpersonal transactions are one among the major problems faced by many individuals, these days. Prajaahita foundation conducted a webinar on “Speech Therapy” on 13th March 2021 from 4.00 PM to 5.00 pm, in order to support the individuals suffering from speech- related difficulties. The session was chaired by Dr. Jacob Pappen, an eminent Consultant Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist.

The idea of communication is something which we should understand even before knowing what speech therapy is.

Communication is a process of transaction of ideas or information from one person to another using a medium or a channel.

Speech and language comes under the whole system of 'communication'. Speech is an essential part of communication and is considered as the channel of communication.

There are two types of communication; verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication is a process possible with the application of words and non-verbal is the one which uses actions and gestures other than words.

If we consider a classroom in a special school, four among ten children are nonverbal. It is socially and ethically injustice to avoid them. Speech therapy should be given to them on a frequent flow. These children are trained through actions, pointers or facial expressions.

How does a child understand speech?

Parents are supposed to be aware about the actions the kids should perform according to the stage of growth. We can perform speech therapy only after understanding this chronology and pattern.

Generally, a child utters the first word when he/ she becomes one year old. The child observes the method of speech from parents and people in their surroundings and tries to attach sounds and syllables in their own style thus producing meaningful words with meaningful syllables.

Steps of Speech Growth

1. Vocalization

This is called the process of humming and whining from birth to six months of growth. This is the first step of the utterance of speech.

2. Babbling Stage

Babbling stage is the time of production of sounds such as “Aa” “ma” and “pa”. There is single sound babbling and combination sound babbling in the babbling stage. The repeated utterance of a single sound is the face of a single sound babbling stage. Separate utterance of two sounds in the beginning and combined utterance later is the specialty of combination sound babbling. A child may utter a meaningful word when s/he becomes one year old.

For example, we can understand that a child spoke something

meaningful only when the child looks at the mother and calls her 'mother'. It begins to combine two words within one and half or two years. Uttering one word in the beginning, two words later, combination of two words together, making it into a sentence and phrases later and gradually learning grammar.

There are particular age specifications for utterances. 'Aa', 'ma', 'pa', 'ba' etc. are the sounds that occur when the child is three years old. The learning time of sounds is up to six years. The child can only utter 'w', 'v', 'zha' and 'ra' only by the time of reaching sixth year. So we

can't assume it as a problem when a two or three year old child does not pronounce these words accurately. The reason is, the child may be learning sounds when s/he is six or seven years old. We can assume there is speech difficulty if the child does not speak even after that stage.

Methods to learn vocabulary

If a one year old child utters two words, his/ her vocabulary stage is two words. A one-to-one and half year old child should have almost ten to fifteen vocabulary with her. The brain development stage

happens from ten to twelve years. The child should have learned around 50000 words when she is twelve years old. This is the pattern of vocabulary development in children.

Parents should be a speech model for the children, because a child's mode of speech and communication depends on the quantity of the communication by the parents.

The Prerequisites Needed for the Beginning Speech

Prerequisites are significant. Sitting, attention, eye contact etc. are the most important among this. When a child does not sit and listen to us when we speak means the child doesn't understand what we try to communicate. Children may not be able to output things if they do not input the matters spoken to them. A child with poor prerequisites will reflect the same in speech also and that is why prerequisites are known as important.

How to give speech therapy at home?

We can call speech therapy home therapy as it is given from home. The home can be considered as a clinic in that scenario and parents become clinicians. There are benefits and drawbacks in giving speech therapy at home. Providing therapy from the early stages of growth, based on the close observation from parents will be effective and helpful. Moreover, home therapy helps to avoid the issues in travel and is time saving. The drawbacks of home therapy are the chances of deficiency of practice and knowledge of parents.

Parents' counseling to the children lacks in the home therapy method. Generally, clinicians understand the problem of the child, reasons for the problem and give the clear picture and guidance to parents on how to rectify and overcome these problems. It will be more helpful for the child to get home therapy after the clinic visit and expert's guidance for once. Parents have to act and take care of the children as therapists because they may not find the problem looking from the perspective of parents.

Phases of conducting home therapy

The checklist to conduct home therapy consists the close observation of the Prerequisites. The list of assessments also includes whether they are listening to the things being spoken, maintaining eye contact etc. Understand the problems accurately. It is important to diagnose whether there are other difficulties (Visual or auditory difficulty) or not. Because these problems may affect the speech capacity adversely. Secondly, it is mandatory to assess the Prerequisite elements. The areas to focus are whether the child observes the things spoken and maintaining eye contact while conducting assessments. Third is to find

whether the child is verbal or non- verbal. It can be classified as non- verbal (if the child does not speak even after becoming twelve years old), mentally retarded or belong to problems like that. Fourth part, we have to focus on the interest of the kid in communication and also the count of the words the child can produce if s/he is interested in talking. A child of one and half years should speak at least twenty words. If that does not happen, vocabulary can be taught with the help of therapy. Fifth thing to focus is the functionality of the kid's mouth, teeth, tongue etc. Activities can be practiced for the movements

if there are problems. Speech is in two types;

Comprehensive and Experiential. Comprehensive is the total of a kid's understanding. Expressing the things understood using words and expressions is known as experiential. While speaking, try to keep the image of the object you are talking about next to their eye or mouth. Clapping the hands loudly also will help to gain eye contact.

Reinforcement

Provide gifts or convey compliments to the child when the s/he speaks something accurately or does without faults. Doing so will result in the growth of curiosity in the child to talk further. When the child cries or persists for something, do not try to fulfil it instantly. Encouraging this will result in habit formation.

Questions and answers.

Q. my daughter is 28 years old. She writes but, cannot do with every letter. Utters words, but not in a union. There are difficulties in pronunciation as well.

Ans: Articulate the methods to utter the words with the help of mouth gestures, let them to pronounce and teach them to practice it in front of the mirror. Find those words with difficult letters and learn them by reading loudly and writing similar words. Start learning the sentences once the word learning is completed.

Q. I am a kindergarten teacher. I would like to talk about a 13 years old child of a doctor couple from our locality. The child is always angry with everyone and everything and doesn't obey anything. He can hear things but finds difficulty with speech. Is there any method to provide speech therapy at home for them?

The child belongs to a nonverbal communication type. First they should provide therapies to decrease the obstinacy and things to be done. Show pictures in order to develop the speech.

THANK YOU