



August 2024
Newsletter

TAYLOR
PHYSICAL THERAPY

HOW OUR CHILDREN COMMUNICATE

When we think about children learning language, we are likely to assume they are Analytic Language Processors (ALP). This means a child acquires language by learning that words are single units of meaning and continue to build on this concept to expand language. Words are combined to form two word utterances, then phrases, then sentences, and eventually conversations while also developing grammar.

What this might look like in your home:

A child points to his mom and states "momma" whenever they have a need. As they develop they learn "up" when they want to be picked up and "milk" when they are thirsty. Over time they will progress to "momma up" then "momma up, milk" and one day "momma, lift me up. I want milk please."



However, what most people don't realize is that there is a second natural way to process and develop language. These children are Gestalt Language Processors (GLP) and they develop language from echolalia (the repetition of speech) to self-generated grammar. These children begin processing language in 'chunks' or 'scripts' that have a set meaning (as opposed to single words). Over time a child will learn to break apart these scripts into smaller pieces and recombine the pieces into new combinations, phrases, and sentences. Over time a child will learn to break apart these scripts into smaller pieces and recombine the pieces into new combinations, phrases, and sentences.

Taylor Physical Therapy

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HOW OUR CHILDREN COMMUNICATE (CONT)

What this (GLP) might look like in your home:

After falling off their bike you rush to your child and say, "Oh no! Are you okay?" Now your child uses this same phrase each time they are hurt or sees someone in pain. Your child enjoys watching Paw Patrol and witnesses the pups being heroes who help others. Anytime they help a friend in need they yell "Rubble on the double!!" You notice that your child has some difficulty communicating their basic wants and needs, but is able to count to 10 or sing their ABCs.

In early stages of development you may see a GLP communicating in 'scripts' that don't necessarily "fit" the situation. These scripts can be as short as a single word or as long as a whole book/song. They are often rich in intonation or melody and are frequently tied to emotional experiences. It is important to realize that while a child's script may not translate literally to you, it is communication and means something to your child. When this communication is not understood or validated it

can lead to frustration and decreased additional attempts to communicate. Over time this can slow language development.



Although research shows us that many autistic children are GLPs, it is important to also note that not all GLPs are autistic. Gestalt language processing is a natural and normal way to develop language, just like analytic language development.

Both GLPs and ALPs can get "stuck" along the way and need assistance to support their language. So whether you are concerned that your child is not growing in their vocabulary or their ability to string words together, or you are noticing they commonly communicate in strings of speech that are difficult to understand or short chunks that may not appropriately fit the context of the communication - they may benefit from the intervention of a speech therapist.

At Taylor Center for Pediatric Therapies, we empower parents to take an active role in their child's care. We thank you for working with us to ensure your children feel better about their communication.

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At Taylor Therapy our speech therapists are Natural Language Acquisition (NLA) trained clinicians. This means they are experts at determining your child's language development style and use that knowledge to best assist them in further development. They also provide neurodiversity-affirming therapy that respects your child's unique communication styles and promotes a more inclusive and effective approach to therapy. They provide support to all children by developing goals that are functional and individualized. They strive to identify and utilize a child's strengths to enhance growth and development of skills. They keep the child and family's individual needs in mind when creating a treatment plan and provide therapy that is flexible and responsive to the child's needs and interests. When working on communication, we explore and support all modalities preferred by each individual child. Through neurodiversity-affirming therapy they work to support children and families in their journey to develop skills in language, social communication, and feeding. Our therapists aim to provide resources and strategies to assist with augmentative and alternative communication, Gestalt Language Processing, sensory differences, and feeding difficulties.



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