

What is Verbal Dyspraxia?

Children with verbal dyspraxia have a difficulty with co-ordinating and making certain movements in their mouth when talking.

People who don't know your child very well may struggle to understand what they are saying as speech can often be unclear or 'clumsy'.

This does not mean that your child has a problem with how their muscles are working or the messages that the brain sends to the muscles.

Producing speech sounds and using them quickly when talking can be challenging for children with verbal dyspraxia. Your child might speak slowly or use the wrong sounds in words.

Children who have verbal dyspraxia may also have oral dyspraxia which is a difficulty moving the muscles in the mouth for movements such as eating and swallowing saliva.

A child with verbal dyspraxia may:

- have a reduced number of sounds that they use when talking, both consonants and vowels.
- use certain sounds more often, ones that they find easiest to say.
- use different sounds to what we would usually hear in the English language.
- make more speech errors if they are tired or upset.
- struggle more to say longer or complex words.
- have difficulties with general co-ordination and physical movements.

Children with verbal dyspraxia often need a high level of support with their speech. This may be having therapy sessions with a Speech and Language Therapist regularly or using a device such as an IPAD to help them get their message across.

Verbal dyspraxia can be diagnosed by a Speech and Language Therapist, a GP, a Paediatrician, an Occupational Therapist or a Physiotherapist. It can take a while for a diagnosis to be made to make sure that the child's difficulties are fully assessed and second opinions are given from other professionals.

Children who have verbal dyspraxia are all different and make progress at different rates. With the correct support in place at home and school it is more likely that your child will learn how to improve their speech.

Your child's speech may be unclear but try not to correct them, instead you can repeat back words that they are unable to pronounce so that they can hear which sounds are in the word. A positive approach will help to build your child's confidence!