Decision making tree for children with speech sound disorder (SSD)

Child presents with speech that has reduced intelligibility. Parents/teachers concerned; no associated medical conditions e.g. CP; Cleft Lip and/or Palate

Assessment: single words; connected speech; oro-motor; articulation/stimulability; phonetic & phonemic inventory; phonological processes; phonological awareness (syllable and phoneme level); inconsistency (multiple productions of same word).

Overarching diagnostic term: Speech Sound Disorder

SSD of unknown origin

- Phonological awareness not age appropriate, and/or continued difficulty at syllable level
  - Delayed phonological awareness (PA)
  - Core Vocabulary Intervention
- 40% or more inconsistent word production (DEAP) and DVD/CAS ruled out
  - Inconsistent Phonological Disorder (IPD)
  - Review/ watchful waiting (age/policy dependant)
- Phonological errors/error patterns noted in single words and/or connected speech noted in phonemic inventory & error pattern analysis. IPD/DVD/CAS ruled out
  - Age appropriate
  - Persisting typical error patterns
  - Atypical error patterns
- Distortions of individual sounds in words and in isolation (non-stimulable) noted in phonetic inventory
- Unusual error patterns, oro-motor, prosody etc., meets strict DVD/CAS criteria
- (Suspected) motor or neuromuscular disorder with oro-motor involvement
  - Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)*
  - ReST (Rapid Syllable Transition (e.g. Ballard, 2001)); Integrated Phonological Awareness Intervention (e.g. Moriarty & Gillon, 2006); Nuffield Dyspraxia Programme 3 (NDP3, Williams & Stephens, 2004)

Diagnoses that can co-occur:
- Delayed phonological awareness AND/OR Articulation disorder AND
- Phonological delay OR Consistent phonological disorder OR Inconsistent phonological disorder. In rare cases: Dysarthria AND CAS e.g. Worster Drought

Overarching diagnostic term: Speech Sound Disorder

- Distortions of individual sounds in words and in isolation noted in phonetic inventory
  - Persistent typical error patterns
  - Atypical error patterns
- Unusual error patterns, oro-motor, prosody etc., meets strict DVD/CAS criteria
  - Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)*
- Articulation disorder
  - Articulation intervention, single sound → CV, VC, CVC etc

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*CAS is often referred to as developmental verbal dyspraxia (DVD) in the UK. CAS is the most common term globally.

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Bibliography


Child Speech Disorder Research Network (2017) Good practice guidelines for the analysis of child speech. Published on RCSLT members’ webpage (www.rcslt.org) and Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit webpage (www.speech-therapy.org.uk).


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