



## Red Flags for communication difficulties



### Talking/Expression

- Doesn't say much. Difficult to engage or doesn't initiate conversation.
- Short sentences or simple sentence structure only (and then...and then...).
- Use of non-specific words like 'stuff' and 'thing'.
- Says a lot but what is said is confusing or vague.
- Leaves out important information. Mixes up the sequence of events.
- Has difficulties talking about feelings beyond the basics – alexithymia.
- Speaking is disjointed – lots of pauses or repetitions.
- Sounds immature.



### Listening/Understanding

- Takes a long time to respond.
- Responses don't fit with the previous question or comment.
- Difficulties following instructions.
- Often uses 'yes', 'no', 'I don't know' answers.
- Needs questions repeated.
- May seem forgetful or confused. Loses concentration.
- Doesn't understand jokes or sarcasm.
- Argues – 'But you said...'



### Social Skills

- Few friends.
- Doesn't see other points of view.
- May bully or is bullied.
- Often has conflict with friends.
- Avoids social situations.
- Engages more easily with much older or younger children.
- Has difficulties negotiating with peers, doesn't know or follow the rules of game.



### Academic Concerns

- Difficulties learning new skills.
- Below average grades or identified learning difficulties.
- School related difficulties e.g., school refusal, anxiety or truancy.
- Behavioral difficulties in classroom.



### Developmental

- Delayed language development (first words after 18 months).
- Hearing impairment or recurrent middle ear infections.
- Prior speech pathology intervention.
- Congenital/Genetic disorder.
- Family history of language or learning difficulties.

Reproduced with permission. Speech Pathology, Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS), Children's Health Queensland.