

Learn About CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH (CAS)

CAS is a neurological speech sound disorder characterized by specific difficulty programming oral motor movements for the production of speech sounds. Children with this diagnosis have difficulty coordinating the jaw, lips, and tongue to consistently produce specific speech sounds at the word, phrase, and/or sentence level. As a result, the clarity of their speech is significantly reduced compared to their same-aged peers. Most children with CAS will understand much more language than they can verbally express.

While a child with a diagnosis of CAS works hard to make gains through speech-language therapy, you can help them feel understood and experience a greater sense of belonging in the following ways:

1. Please be patient and give them time to answer on their own. If you're unclear, kindly ask them if they can show you, or offer a choice that allows them to answer via a gesture (e.g., nod or pointing).
2. Some of the words and sounds they produce are not perfect yet, and that's okay! These words are not "baby talk." In speech-language therapy we call these "approximations," which are words that have sound substitutions or omissions that are a little easier to say (e.g., "wahto"/water, "pway"/play, "dop/top"/stop). Speech-language pathologists teach approximations to help kids communicate and then help them gain greater clarity of speech.
3. Talk to children about how this child is working hard to improve their speech, and encourage kids to include them. We want children with CAS to have chances to participate and build friendships.

