



CdLS Foundation

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Speech & Language: Try and Try Again to Help Child Develop Speech

Article from Reaching Out

Until very recently it was assumed that most children with CdLS would never speak. Period. Today, due in large part to the work of speech therapists like Dr. Marjorie Goodban, we know that many mildly and moderately affected children will learn some speech, and even the profoundly affected will develop their own forms of communication.

The importance of early and intensive intervention cannot be over-emphasized, said Dr. Goodban, professor and chair of the Speech Communication Department at Elmhurst College during a workshop on language development.

During their early months, a qualified therapist should examine all children with CdLS, Dr. Goodban believes, one who will not be afraid to set high aspirations for them. "Insist that the therapist expect that the child may speak," she emphasized.

Considered an authority on the development of language in children with CDIS, Dr. Goodban has worked for several years with Becky, daughter of Jack and Roberta of Illinois. Although the accepted medical sources of the day all said that CdLS children do not develop speech, Dr. Goodban developed numerous innovative techniques, which helped Becky learn to speak with some fluency.

Parents can aid speech development at home by using some of these techniques and by doing the same things with their CdLS child that seem to come naturally with healthy children, Dr. Goodban feels. Most importantly, she said, talk to the child from early infancy. Establish that all-important eye contact with activities like bubble popping and nose beeps. After that, use parallel talk ("Baby go bye-bye"), self-talk ("Mommy drives the car"), and "expectant waiting" to give the child a chance to respond. She found the use of exaggerated voice inflection particularly useful in her work with Becky.

Dr. Goodban cautioned parents to be aware that some children who have been diagnosed as deaf at birth or early in life may actually experience an improvement in hearing later on. "We do not know why speech and communication are delayed," she said, "but it is important that parents get the best, and earliest help possible for their child."