

## Some solutions

Check regularly for sensory impairment i.e. eyes and ears. Make sure that teachers, family and friends are aware of the difficulties with sight and hearing and how to support your child (e.g. care and maintenance of her hearing aid).

Teach your child how to blow her nose. This will help to clear the sinuses and improve resonance in speech as well as equalising air pressure within the ear to improve hearing.

Play lots of story-telling games and encourage your child to tell you about things that have happened at school etc. Provide prompts if she 'dries up' e.g. "I see", "So then....?" If your child is not very fluent, try playing 'how many can you think of' and word-association games. If anyone playing cannot make an obvious link between two words, ask them to explain. Use objects to explain concepts like first, middle and last. Make sure that you explain figures of speech and idioms where necessary (e.g. 'it's all gone pear-shaped').

Instructions need to be short and clear. With older children, use their reading and writing skills to help. Ask your daughter to repeat the instructions back to you. Encourage her to make repeating instructions a habit without prompting; "so you want me to....". If your child constantly repeats questions, reassure her that you have already answered to the best of your ability, and that the answer remains the same. If she feels that she still doesn't have the information she needs, you could help her to find it.

However, if your child has advanced verbal skills, make teachers aware that she may still require help with planning and organising her work.

## Practical tips from a mum

- Make speech fun. Use the nursery rhymes or songs that they enjoy in order to encourage them to speak more. Give lots of praise for joining in
- When working on pronouncing words only try two or three times as they can become quickly tired
- Always encourage your child to speak. Never tell them to be quiet even when they have asked the same question, or told you the same thing many, many times
- Always give plenty of praise
- Be patient

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# Speech and Language Problems

FACTSHEET NINE

# Speech and Language Problems

Some girls with Turner syndrome have excellent reading and verbal reasoning skills and larger than average vocabularies. They also tend to have much better verbal skills than 'practical' skills. However, some girls may have problems with their speech and language. This leaflet will help you recognise the problems and also provides some practical solutions.

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## Speech problems

- **A high, arched palate** (roof of the mouth) means that some sounds, particularly those involving precise contact between the tongue and the roof of the mouth (e.g,n,l,d,ch,j), may be difficult to make
- **Hearing impairment** may mean that the child hears speech sounds as 'muffled' (as if underwater) and reproduces these sounds as 'fuzzy' speech. Or your child does not hear quieter and higher sounds such as 's'; this is important if the child is learning plurals (cow/cows) and possessives (yours, Mummy's) and how verbs are formed (I go, she goes). She may also seem inattentive or become disruptive in the classroom; however, you may notice these things in a child who is hyperactive and/or has difficulty in focusing her attention but has no hearing impairment
- **Small sinuses** may result in a blocked nose and sounds that are 'nasal' or 'coldy'
- **Lack of confidence** may mean that a child doesn't say much or speaks very quietly. These may also indicate a hearing impairment

## Language problems

- **Narration:** there may be difficulties in narrating past events or retelling stories. Your daughter may have difficulty in finding exactly the 'right' word, and in organising what she wants/needs to say, which might make her speech hesitant
- **Processing information and responding to body language and facial expression can be difficult.** This can make some interaction seem 'inappropriate'. Your daughter may find it hard to plan and organise her work, but often responds well to an 'overarching' approach.
- **Abstract concepts:** a child may have difficulty with more abstract concepts in language, such as either/or, next to/ beside etc
- **Repeat questions:** they may repeatedly ask for the same information
- **Following instructions:** they may have difficulty in following instructions unless they are very precisely worded
- **Information is taken literally**
- **Uneven and untidy handwriting** results from a lack of spatial awareness (see Factsheet 6).

