

**DEVELOPMENTAL VERBAL DYSPRAXIA (DVD) IS AN OLDER TERM, PRIMARILY USED IN THE UK AND SOME OTHER REGIONS.**

**CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH (CAS) IS THE PREFERRED AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED TERM.**



*'It is no good just explaining something. I have to **feel** the words.'*

*Joe. A young man with verbal dyspraxia.*



## What it is

**Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)** is a rare condition which refers to difficulties in making and coordinating the precise articulatory movements required in the production of clear speech.

Children with CAS find it challenging to make speech sounds correctly and to join sounds together in words and sentences.

**Oral dyspraxia**, on the other hand, refers to the challenges in coordinating the movements of the vocal tract (larynx, lips, tongue, palate) when not

producing speech. Children with oral dyspraxia have challenges carrying out oral motor tasks such as blowing and licking. It would seem logical to think that if a child has verbal dyspraxia they must have oral dyspraxia too, but research suggests otherwise.

Although most professionals now distinguish between the two, occasionally the terms are used interchangeably, which can be confusing. Some children with verbal dyspraxia will also have an element of motor dyspraxia.

Early identification is crucial to success. These children need a high level of specialist speech and language therapy over a number of years, and in some cases other professional input. They may also exhibit differences with reading, spelling and handwriting, particularly if their speech difficulties persist beyond the age of 5 ½ years.



## Routes to identification

This is a diagnosis made by a speech and language therapist (SLT) and a teacher can refer directly to this specialist. A health visitor may well be the first person to recognise differences with SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs). Otherwise, a GP should be consulted and a referral to a SLT (Speech and Language Therapist) should be made.