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Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

3905 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707

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Mothers Found to Overestimate Children's Language Development



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

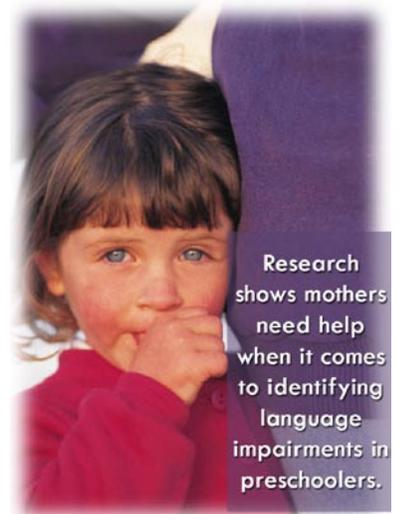
Glascoe states that most children's problems with impaired development have been detected through clinical judgement based on parental concern.¹ In 1994, Pulsifer et al showed that maternal estimates of a child's developmental status do provide a good indication for further screening and assessment.² However, a study more recently published by *Behavioral Medicine*, focused on assessment of vocabulary and gross motor development specifically.³ In this study, Willinger strongly showed that **mothers consistently overestimated their own children's language development.**

They evaluated children between three and six years of age. Mothers were asked to rate their children's vocabulary and their gross motor development as accelerated, normal, or delayed. Children were then assessed and compared to age-related norms using objective measurement tools. **Mothers failed to identify delayed vocabulary development 96% of the time** (false negative). Mothers showed 0% false positives for vocabulary delay. In terms of gross motor development, maternal estimates failed to identify delay 68% of the time and falsely identified a delay 26% of the time.

These results suggest that parents should not be relied upon to identify language disorder in pre-school children. Instead, the

responsibility to recognize language delay or disorder must go to relied upon professionals such as healthcare providers, teachers, and counselors. Five to eight percent of children under the age of five demonstrate developmental impairments of speech and language.⁴ Problems with primary language delay or disorder continue into adolescence and beyond 30% to 60% of the time.^{5,6} Studies reveal a connection between language delay and underachievement in school, social problems, emotional problems, and behavioral problems.⁷⁻¹³ Timely introduction of qualified, pediatric speech therapy can help children with primary impairments of speech and language.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

When doctors and other experts suspect a language delay or disorder, they can recommend an objective, expert assessment at Emerge - A Child's Place. Parents may find a full speech therapy assessment helpful in objectively determining the needs of their child. At Emerge, a qualified pediatric speech therapist can assess any suspected impairment, objectively compare a child's performance to established measures, and provide a frank discussion with parents. When therapy is indicated, Emerge can help improve the odds for developmentally delayed children. Doctors, counselors, and teachers can provide a very important service by identifying potential problems that are often invisible to a preschooler's parents and recommending an assessment at Emerge - A Child's Place.



Research shows mothers need help when it comes to identifying language impairments in preschoolers.

Integrating Occupational and Speech Therapy



Among children with language delay, the prevalence of motor and sensory challenges is high, and the converse is also true. For many types of challenges, Emerge provides a more comprehensive pediatric therapy approach by integrating services from both occupational therapists and speech therapists.

Please tell parents about Emerge - A Child's Place
Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish

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