

What is pragmatic language?

Pragmatic language refers to the rules for social language. Pragmatics involve being able to use language for different purposes, being able to change language according to the needs of a listener or situation, and following the rules for conversations and storytelling. Things like being able to take turns in conversation, introducing new conversational topics appropriately, being able to interpret facial expressions and tone of voice, understanding personal space, and eye contact are all *pragmatic language* skills.

Pragmatic language difficulties may also be referred to as a social skills deficit or disorder.

An individual with a pragmatic language disorder may:

- say inappropriate things during conversation
- have a hard time sharing with others
- jump around from topic to topic
- tell stories in a disorganized way
- have little variety in language use
- have difficulty understanding when conversation partners need clarification or explanation
- ask questions that are difficult to follow
- have difficulty maintaining friendships
- stand too close to others when speaking
- understand concrete and literal language, but struggle with abstract language and figures of speech

A pragmatic language impairment may occur by itself, with no other disorders or issues present. However, it may also be seen with disorders such as *autism* or a *language disorder*.

It is important to note that social skills vary between different cultures. As long as a person is able to understand and appropriately follow the social customs of his/her culture, that is not considered a disorder.

How to Promote Speech & Language Skills

While Having Fun!

Many activities your child already enjoys can encourage and build speech and language skills! Board games and certain apps provide practice with skills such as turn taking, social skills, expressive language, vocabulary, describing, and grammar, as well as provide opportunities to practice articulation (speech sounds) and fluency.

Suggested Board Games:

Scattergories: This game allows for practice of naming items in categories. Rapid naming tasks such as these help build and strengthen connections in the brain to connect concepts and ideas.

Ked Bandy: This game is great to focus on a variety of language goals! It includes such tasks as describing, asking/answering questions, and vocabulary. To add difficulty, make your own cards – you can add such things as famous people, family members, school subjects, body parts, countries/states, animals, etc.

Apples to Apples: This game is perfect to focus on skills such as word relationships, describing, comparing/contrasting, and vocabulary. There is both a junior and adult version available.

Guess Who: This is a great game to work on reasoning, describing, asking/answering questions, and vocabulary.

Ronys Story Cubes: These cubes allow you to build your own stories, so you can focus on such things as grammar, building vocabulary, expanding sentences, telling a story in the appropriate sequence, and so much more! For extra practice, write down the stories that you create, and have your child draw pictures to go along with it.

Connect Four: This game is great for students working on speech sounds – have your child say a word or sentence with his/her target sound correctly before taking a turn.

Suggested Apps:

Toon Tastic (free with optional paid upgrades; for iPad): This app allows you to make your own animated films. You can draw your own set and/or characters, or use ones built into the app.

Super Super Story Maker (free with optional paid upgrades, for iPad): Similar to Toon Tastic, this app allows you to make your own story book.

Both of these apps provide great practice for language skills such as grammar, turn taking, social skills, sequencing, and vocabulary.

Mad Libs (free for iPad, iPhone, & iPod Touch): This app is a great way to work on grammar and parts of speech. The old fashioned paper and pencil version works, too!

Classify It! (free for iPad and iPhone): This app targets categories, similarities, & differences while allowing your child to learn about different animals. Various levels of difficulty.

Talking Tom (free for iPad, iPhone, & Android): This app is good for targeting specific speech sounds – have your child say his/her target sound in words, phrases, and/or sentences, and listen to Tom repeat them; then, decide if it was a correct or incorrect production of the sound. (Tip: Turn off some of the “extra” features in the settings to focus solely on speech.)

Social Skills

Home Practice

Practice at least one activity per day. Check off a box when you have completed the task.

Being A Good Listener

Ask your partner to tell you about their day. Practice good listening skills while they talk.



Compliments

Give a compliment to a friend or family member. Tell them something you like about them.



Reading Practice

Pick your favorite book to read with a partner. Make comments, ask questions, and make predictions.



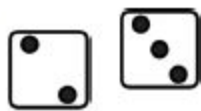
Asking Questions

Get to know your friends and family. Practice asking questions about someone's day.



Board Game Fun

Play a board game with a partner. Practice following the rules, taking turns, and being a good sport.



Comments

Practice making comments about a television show, book, or movie. Try to stay on topic.



Storytelling

Tell someone about your favorite movie, show, toy, or game.



Where can I learn more?

<i>Website</i>	<i>Details</i>
www.asha.org/public	The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA – the national organization for SLPs) is a wonderful resource for information about all speech and language disorders and treatment.
identifythesigns.org	A great website that has information about different signs and symptoms of various communication disorders.
www.home-speech-home.com	Home Speech Home is a website run by two SLPs. Check out the menu on the left side of the page for information about normal speech & language development, as well as information about many different child speech & language disorders.
www.understood.org	A parent-friendly site that covers a variety of learning and attention issues, as well as resources to help clarify the IEP process and special education services.
www.stutteringhelp.org	The Stuttering Foundation has great resources for students, parents, and teachers.
www.autism-society.com	The Autism Society has lots of helpful information for parents and teachers about autism.
successforkidswithhearingloss.com	This website has resources for both parents and teachers about hearing loss.