

GESTALT LANGUAGE PROCESSING

What is Gestalt language Processing?



Rather than learning one word at a time, children learn words in chunks.

Referred to as the “Top-Down” approach

Different way of processing words, not regarded as a learning disability.

Children who exhibit signs of Gestalt language may use incorrect phrases to express themselves. Unlike analytic language processors, they first memorize phrases and then find the meaning.

Signs and Stages of Gestalt Processing

Stage 1

Child memorizes a phrase or sentence based on its pitch. These are called “scripts”

Stage 2

Child will begin to use parts of the phrase or sentence

Stage 3

Child begins to use the words individually and even create further combinations in sentences

Stage 4

Child will begin to create original sentences rather than using memorized scripts (Simple grammar)

Stage 5

More complex sentences will be used by the child

Stage 6

Complete mastery of the word, phrase, and demonstrates appropriate use

Signs

- Repeating lines from movies, tv, songs, or people they frequently interact with
- Mimicking the tone of a phrase even if it uses the wrong words
- Using the same phrase to communicate in multiple environments. Repetitive patterns, will not make sense in all contexts
- Difficulty holding a spontaneous conversation or answering questions
- Words may be interpreted as unintelligible at times

Supporting a Child with Gestalt Language Process

- Explore what the child may be trying to communicate through their scripts
- Acknowledge all attempts at communication even if they are not understood.
- Try to understand the context behind the attempted communication
- Provide a safe environment for the child to practice using words and phrases
- Make declarations to the child rather than asking them direct questions
- Consult a speech therapist or pathologist