FRAGILE X SYNDROME

What is Fragile X Syndrome?

- A genetic condition present from birth
- It is the most common known cause of an inherited mental impairment
- Characterized by intellectual and behavioral difficulties
- Can affect how individuals learn and interact with others
- Boys are more severely affected than girls

Physical Characteristics

- Elongated face
- Large head
- Wide forehead
- Prominent ears
- The above characteristics typically become evident around age 8.
- Cognitive deficits become more evident later in childhood

Communication Skills and Needs

- Males typically show moderate to severe delays in communication and are more frequently nonverbal
- Research suggests that females typically do not show significant delays in communication, but show deficits primarily in social skills
- Communication breakdowns typically occur during conversation
  - Scripts can make communication more accessible
- Children with Fragile X Syndrome tend to understand what is said to them better than they are able to express themselves

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Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Help the child speak clearly so he/she is easier to understand
- Assist in finding alternative methods of communication (if necessary)
- Encourage:
    - Slower rate of speech
    - Appropriate grammar
    - Increased vocabulary
    - Appropriate social skills
- Incorporate familiar routines and structure during transitions from one activity to the next
- Consider each child's developmental delay when designing activities

Considerations for Working with Children with Fragile X

- They may have…
    - Difficulty with answering questions
    - Poor topic maintenance
    - Difficulty with abstract language (reasoning and making inferences)
    - Poor eye contact
- Some children also:
    - Go on tangents during conversations
    - Self-repeat words, sentences, and/or topics
- Moving may often encourage them to talk

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For more information, visit:
http://www.fragilex.org/