

# PEDIATRIC HIV

## Pediatric HIV and Communication

- Children with HIV may have:
  - Expressive language impairments
  - Receptive language impairments
  - Hearing impairments
    - Up to 50% of children with HIV have hearing loss
  - Motor problems that may affect speech
- Unstable home environments or low socio-economic family status may decrease children's access to services

## Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Work with an interdisciplinary team (pediatricians, physical therapists, educators, etc.) to address the needs of children with HIV and their families
- Advocate for early intervention
- Educate parents on expected developmental milestones
- Deliver evidence-based, individualized treatment
  - Feeding/swallowing treatment, language skills, phonological skills, preliteracy, literacy, etc.

## Classroom Modifications

- Give clear and simple directions
- Incorporate language enrichment into activities throughout the day
- Make accommodations for learning outside of the classroom; children with HIV may be hospitalized frequently
- Work with physical therapist and occupational therapist to support child's gross and fine motor needs



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## Resources for Parents and Families:

Pediatric AIDS Foundation: [www.pedaids.org](http://www.pedaids.org)

Child Welfare Information Gateway: [1.usa.gov/1Nqxnpb](http://1.usa.gov/1Nqxnpb)

Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS (Phoenix): [www.swhiv.org](http://www.swhiv.org)

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## What is Pediatric HIV?

- The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) affects 2.6 million children below the age of 15 years worldwide
- In the U.S., roughly 200 children are born with HIV each year
- Without early detection and proper medical treatment, HIV can become Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

## How is HIV transmitted?

- Transmission from infected mother to child
  - In utero
  - During birth
  - In early infancy via breast milk
- Blood transfusion
- Sexual assault

## Possible Complications

- Cognitive impairments
- Motor impairments
- Speech impairments
- Voice disorders
- Feeding or swallowing disorders
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Frequent, severe bacterial infections that result in hospitalization
- Lung disease
- Impaired brain growth (encephalopathy)
  - Children with this condition are more likely to have cognitive, motor, and language disorders

## Prevention

- Mother-to-child transmission is decreasing due to development of effective medication
- Mothers who are HIV positive should speak to their doctor about how to prevent transmission to their children



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