



## “Children and Closed Head Injury”

By

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Unfortunately, there are many school-aged children who suffer from TBI, or Traumatic Brain Injury. Bicycles, Rollerblades, pools, cars, and sports are all culprits of head injury. Many parents and teachers know how to help prevent a child from getting hurt (using helmets, seat belts, and practicing traffic safety), but what many do not know is the effect even a slight head injury can have on a child's memory, cognition, and speech skills.

**TBI can result in a concussion or coma. The following are deficits that can result from TBI:**

1. Loss of short-term memory
2. Loss of sight or the ability to recognize objects by sight
3. Loss of smell and taste
4. Loss of fine-motor skills (writing, holding a fork, putting pieces in a puzzle)
5. Loss of oral-motor skills (eating, kissing, blowing, articulating sounds)
6. Loss of sensation and/or the ability to execute gross motor movements (walking)
7. Loss of emotions, constant frustration, depression, constant anger, or inappropriate behaviors
8. Lack of muscle tone in the lips and tongue, known as **dysarthria**
9. Word finding problems and/or loss of the ability to express ideas through spoken language, known as **aphasia**
10. Swallowing difficulties known as **dysphagia**

These problems can be evidenced months after a child has suffered a head injury. Children who suffer a TBI often receive rehabilitation services including physical, occupational, and speech therapy. Children may have residential or private placements before returning to the regular classroom. The public school teacher may encounter a child in the classroom who is recovering from TBI. If should occur, a speech therapist, physical therapist, or occupational therapist in in the school may be able to provide important information regarding techniques to faciliate learning in the classroom.



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