





Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Traumatic Brain Injury in Children

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Unfortunately, there are many school-aged children who suffer from TBI, or Traumatic Brain Injury. Every year, 37,000 children are hospitalized and 435,000 are treated in emergency rooms for TBI. Bicycles, roller blades, 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.

- 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.

TBI can result in a concussion or coma. Depending on the severity and location of the brain injury, the following are deficits that can occur:



- 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, 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.

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. For children in school who are recovering from TBI, a speech-language pathologist (SLP), physical therapist, and/or occupational therapist may be able to provide important information regarding techniques to facilitate learning.





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What Can SLPs Do?

Depending on the deficits the child is experiencing, an SLP can help with:

1. Improving speech clarity
2. Improving receptive and expressive language
3. Improving attention, memory and executive function skills (e.g. problem-solving, sequencing, etc.)
4. Improving social skills
5. Improving swallowing/increasing swallow safety

What Can Teachers Do?

Teachers who have a student with TBI in their class can help the child deal with the effects of the TBI. The student may have

difficulty with concentration, organization, and memory. Some accommodations that may help include:

1. Reducing distractions
2. Chunking assignments
3. Repeating/providing written directions and other visuals
4. Having the student complete checklists for tasks
5. Providing extra time
6. Providing the student with teacher's notes
7. Allowing the student to record lectures to listen to later
8. Seating the student near the point of instruction.

Related Handy Handouts®:

[425 – Childhood Concussions](#)

[531 – Right Hemisphere Brain Damage](#)

References

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