Book Review

Title: *Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome*

Author: Libby Kumin

Publisher: Woodbine House, Baltimore, 2003


Cost: $19.95 USD

Reviewer: Martha Guinan, MPH, Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawai‘i

*Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome*, is an indispensable guide about language acquisition for young children with Down syndrome. The author, Libby Kumin, is the nationally recognized authority on the subject.

This book is an updated, expanded edition of her earlier work, *Communication Skills in Children with Down Syndrome* (1994). She takes a practical approach providing understandable technical explanations and related activities to increase learning and language. She concentrates on the early ages where language makes the most impact, from birth to about ages 5 or 6. Dr. Kumin describes the stages of communication development and how physical characteristics common to Down syndrome affect acquisition of language and speech skills. She explains how the delayed progression of those skills can lead to frustration and other problems.

Leading readers through the results of a speech-language assessment, Dr. Kumin helps us understand the role of a speech language pathologist. To prepare the parent, she describes what to expect in communication skills development in school. A proponent of inclusion, she emphasizes the need for strong communication models and opportunities to practice communication skills. She describes school language demands such as the language of instruction, curriculum, testing and classroom routine and its effect. For example children with Down syndrome may have difficulty following long and complex verbal directions. By breaking the directions down, they can experience success in following classroom rules.

Through explanations and strategies to improve expressive communication skills, this book is an able assistant to the parent in alleviating the frustrations of a child who may not have intelligible speech until age two or later. Every parent of a child with Down syndrome can attest to their own, as well as their child’s, frustration of others needing the parent to serve as interpreter.

*Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome* puts 23 years of research and experience in working with people with Down syndrome into an easily readable guidebook for parents and caregivers about characteristics unique to Down syndrome and their impact on language development. It is highly recommended as an informational resource by parents, caretakers, teachers, and anyone else charged with the responsibility of caring for a child with Down syndrome.
Dr. Kumin, founder of the Down Syndrome Center for Excellence at Loyola College in Maryland, shares her intimate knowledge of the strengths and limitations of language development in children with Down syndrome and the strategies for managing them. The early chapters deal with the basics of language development and the variations that are specific to Down syndrome. There are then several chapters that break down early communication into stages: prespeech, one word phases, two and three word phases, etc. Each chapter discusses normal developmental issues and available data about relevant milestones. Children with Down syndrome who have motor speech deficits have been inadequately diagnosed, which could have a major impact on the interventions used by speech pathologists when treating patients, a new study indicates. Share: FULL STORY. A new study indicates that children with Down syndrome who have motor speech deficits have been inadequately diagnosed, which could have a major impact on the interventions used by speech pathologists when treating patients. 

Motor speech skills in children with Down syndrome: A descriptive study. International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 2016; 1 DOI: 10.3109/17549507.2015.1112836. Cite This Page Designed for children with Down syndrome aged from 6 months. Learn more. See and Learn Language and Reading. See and Learn Language and Reading is a structured teaching programme that is designed to teach young children with Down syndrome to talk and to read. The programme is evidence-based and easy to use at home and at school. Our Down Syndrome Issues and Information books offer comprehensive information about development, education and adult living for people with Down syndrome. Most are now out of print, but are available as PDF ebooks from our online stores. We are working on new editions and expect to publish these as books and ebooks in 2018. Buy (USA) Buy (UK). Videos.