

## Social Communication Disorder

Social communication disorder is characterized by pragmatic impairment, the area of linguistics that has to do with how meaning is created and interpreted in both verbal and nonverbal interactions. Children have difficulty in using language in different social contexts, understanding things that are implied but not verbally stated, and communicating when storytelling.



## Signs & Symptoms

Signs of social communication disorder can present in early childhood, but it may not be diagnosed until a child is school age. Children with the disorder may have trouble learning the basic rules of conversation (how to start a conversation, listening, staying on topic, and knowing when it is over). A child with social communication disorder might:

- Be delayed in reaching language milestones
- Have little interest in social interactions
- Frequently go off topic or monopolize conversations
- Not adapt their language to whomever they are speaking to
- Have trouble understanding information that is implied

## Causes & Risk Factors

The exact cause of social communication disorder is unknown, but is thought to be caused by a flaw in the brain's right hemisphere, or that it is related to weak executive functioning skills. Risk factors for developing social communication disorder include:

- Damage to the right hemisphere of the brain
- Having a learning disability
- Experiencing a traumatic brain injury

## Diagnosis & Treatment

In order to be diagnosed with social communication disorder, symptoms must be present in early childhood and autism spectrum disorder must be ruled out. Treatment plans commonly consist of speech therapy and an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents can also help by making reading interactive and modeling good communication behaviors.

Sources – Child Mind Institute: <https://childmind.org/guide/social-communication-disorder/#social-communication-disorder-what-to-look-for> and Source – American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Social-Communication-Disorders-in-School-Age-Children>