

What is Gestalt Language Processing?

Non autistic children typically learn language through Analytic Language Development.

Most (up to 85%) of autistic kids learn language through Gestalt Language Development (GLP).

Instead of starting with single words and then adding on more words to form complete sentences (analytic language development), autistic children tend to first learn whole phrases that have heavy intonation and deep meaning to them.

They may pick these up from just directly talking to them but also very common from media such as TV, Ipad etc.

We call these kids Gestalt language developers and they have to go through the 1-6 stages of Natural Language Acquisition to develop language.

Stage 1- Uses gestalts (phrases sometimes can be single word) which are usually heard as scripting/echolalia. Intonation is very important here.

Stage 2- Mitigation of gestalts and mix and match of partial gestalts

Stage 3- Breakdown of mitigated gestalts further and to form single words and mix/match these single words. Individual words start to have meaning here.

Stage 4-6- Begin use of simple to complex grammar in sentences.

It is possible to be in more than one stage at anytime, look for the dominant stage!

So what type of speech therapy should GLPs get?

Need to find a speech pathologist certified in the **Meaningful Speech course** and/or NLA course.

Also I would highly recommend reading Marge Blanc's Book titled '**Natural Language Acquisition on the Autism spectrum**'. Also I recommend reading and watching the videos available on the Communication Development Center website (<https://communicationdevelopmentcenter.com/>)

As a parent you can:

Acknowledge your child's scripts/echolalia

Avoid one word labels

Avoid questions- instead use declarative language!

Use heavy intonation with modeling and gestalt phrases that are easy to mitigate. For example, instead of saying 'Give me the Apple' model 'give it to me'

Engage your child in child led play and whatever may interest them!