Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Teacher information guide

What is DLD?

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a communication disorder that affects a child's ability to use and understand language.

DLD can have a big impact on a child's learning and achievement which can continue into adulthood.

There is no link between limited exposure to language and DLD and no other known cause. However, children with DLD may have an accompanying condition such as a speech sound difficulty, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyslexia or Dyspraxia.

Language disorders can also be associated with certain biomedical conditions although are not caused by them. These conditions include:

- Autistic spectrum conditions
- Genetic Syndromes
- Sensori-neural hearing loss or episodes of glue ear
- Intellectual disability

DLD is not as widely recognised as other developmental conditions such as Autism.

DLD is more common in boys.

Signs of DLD

DLD can look different in everyone, and specific needs may change with time.

A young person with DLD will typically struggle with:

- Paying attention
- Understanding different language such as explanations, definitions, narrative, social language
- Remembering what has been said
- Learning vocabulary and finding their words
- Putting their thoughts into words
- Sequencing their ideas and sentences
- Telling stories and explaining
- Joining in with other children
- Understanding and managing emotions
- Making inferences and predictions
- Understanding and comparing concepts such as position, shape, time, money
- Understanding non-literal language such as sarcasm, puns, idioms, jokes and slang

A young person with DLD may:

Struggle with social interaction and find it hard to form and keep friendships

Find it difficult to listen and concentrate due to the effort of processing language

Learn more easily through visual and practical methods

Be at increased risk of reading and writing difficulties

Seem passive or withdrawn

Feel embarrassed and frustrated which can result in emotional and behavioural difficulties

Be at increased risk of mental health problems

A young person with DLD won't just pick up language on their own and will need to be taught language skills.

Supporting a young person with DLD

Provide a communication friendly environment (CFE):

Be face to face.

Say their name before asking questions or giving instructions to get their attention.

Keep distractions to a minimum.

Use pictures and symbols such as word charts, visual timetables and story planners.

Use signs and gestures.

Model and demonstrate.

Simplify your language and talk slowly.

Allow them plenty of time to think, find their words and express themselves.

Repeat information.

Encourage them to ask for clarification if they seem unsure.

Encourage them to communicate with you however they can, such as pointing, gesture, facial expressions.

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DLD affects about 2 children in every primary school classroom

A young person using more than one language will experience difficulties learning their first and other languages so an interpreter may be needed to help during an assessment.

Further support

For further advice and support you can contact:

Centre and South Warwickshire Specialist Teaching Service *(STS)* **Tel:** 01926 476600

Speech and Language Therapy *(SaLT)* **Tel:** 01926 567139 **Email:** Louise.Carr@swft.nhs.uk

North Warwickshire STS **Tel:** 01926 413777

SaLT **Tel:** 02476 378620 **Email:** bethaney.brown@swft.nhs.uk

East Warwickshire STS **Tel:** 01788 338130

SaLT **Tel:** 02476 378620 **Email:** bethaney.brown@swft.nhs.uk

Children's SLT homepage:
https://www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/speech-and-language-therapy-children

Useful websites:
www.radld.org
www.afasic.org.uk
https://speechandlanguage.org.uk

www.rcslt.org
www.engage-dld.com