

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Information leaflet for school staff

What is Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)?

- Children and young people with DLD have difficulties understanding spoken language and/or using it to express themselves.
- A child or young person may be described as having DLD when their language difficulties:
 - make everyday life and learning at nursery or school much harder
 - continue even after getting extra help at home and in nursery or school
 - are likely to be long term.
- There is no known cause of DLD. However, we know that it is **not** caused by:
 - parenting style
 - being bilingual
 - emotional difficulties
 - being autistic
 - other medical conditions, such as hearing loss or severe learning difficulties.
- Children and young people with DLD may have other conditions such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or Dyslexia.
- DLD affects around two children in every classroom.

How does a child with DLD act at school?

Every child and young person with DLD is different. Children's needs and behaviours will also change as they get older.

- These are some of the things you may see in a child or young person with DLD:
 - Difficulties focussing in class (especially when listening to lots of spoken information).
 - Finding it hard to follow instructions or understand questions.
 - They might need more time to make sense of spoken or written information.
 - Limited understanding and use of words.

- They may find it hard to express themselves, including finding the right words and putting their ideas in order.
- Having trouble getting along with others, including joining in, working or playing together.
- Having difficulties understanding things like jokes, puns, slang, or words that do not mean exactly what they say.
- Having difficulties with reading and writing.
- Some children and young people who have behaviour or emotional problems may also have DLD without anyone knowing.
- Language and communication difficulties should be considered for these children.

What can I do to support them?

- Children and young people with DLD do not learn language as fast or as easily as others. They need extra help and other ways to learn.
- In a communication-friendly place, children and young people with DLD can do well in school.
- Adults can help children and young people by changing how they talk and communicate. The next few points can help with this:
 - Showing information with pictures, symbols, photos, or videos.
 - Creating ways to learn by doing things and giving them the experience of trying.
 - Using shorter instructions, asking simpler questions, giving clear examples, and explaining new words.
 - Giving them more time to understand questions and instructions. This allows them to think of their own ideas.
 - Let them use a ‘talk partner’ about their ideas before sharing them with the class.
 - Repeating and practicing things they have already learned so they can remember and build on them.
 - Working together, like setting goals and planning, to best help the child or young person.

Speech and language therapy support

If you are worried about a child or young person in your class who is having trouble understanding or using language, talk to your link Therapist or call 020 3316 8900 to join a phone drop-in session and speak to a Therapist.

Get more information about DLD on these websites:

- AFASIC <https://afasic.org.uk/>
- Speech and Language UK https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ican_dld_guide_final_aug4.pdf
- Raising Awareness of DLD (RADLD) <https://radld.org/>

Contact our service

Call us on 020 3316 8900, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

Out of hours: please leave a message with your name and number, and we will call you back by the next working day.

You can also email us at whh-tr.barnetcit@nhs.net

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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