

## A Quick Guide to Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

### What is DLD?

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There are three key/ agreed criteria:

- There must be a persistent problem with language. (A sense of severity - Language difficulties that are not transient, it is a 'disorder' not a 'delay'.)
- The language difficulties will affect everyday life (impact on social life skills, learning, etc.)
- Absence of other reasons for the difficulties.

There is not one single presenting issue affecting all pupils with DLD. It is likely to affect aspects of language such as:

- Receptive and expressive language.
- Syntax, sentence structure, grammar.
- Comprehension.
- Use of language (e.g. pragmatics)
- Speech sound and phonological awareness.

### Implications for a pupil

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Difficulties in Language and Communication will persist despite intervention and go beyond appropriate developmental stages. Some aspects that may affect school learning include:

- May miss off grammatical endings to words 'I bake with Mum' rather than 'I baked with Mum'.
- May get the order of words jumbled.
- May mix up words for example 'buyed' instead of 'bought'.
- With peer group they may not understand rules of the game or struggle in groups.
- Has difficulties explaining what they want to say or struggle to understand.
- Quiet in whole class situations and activities, passive learner.
- Might not get jokes, or inferences.

There are co-occurring difficulties, for example in memory or attention.

There is huge potential for impact on other areas such as SEMH (these children may be perceived as being 'difficult to manage' or 'disengaged'), and on learning difficulties – for example difficulties in reading or writing including dyslexia.

### How to help – top tips

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1. **Pre-teaching:** key concepts and vocabulary – as a class or perhaps for a short time before lesson. (See SENIT Simple Guide to Pre teaching).
2. **Time:** including take up or thinking time and additional time to complete a task.
3. **Visuals:** using visual prompts can help to signpost activities and trigger memory. By using images of the subject you're discussing, this will help the student to link information and categorise for storing.
4. **Keep your sentences short and concise.** Use straightforward language with clear key words.
5. Avoid **unnecessary speech**, pupils may also need **literal language**, if they are struggling to cope with metaphor and idioms.
6. Use specific language such as "Put your books in your bag." Rather than "Put your books away."
7. Repeat sentences back with correct grammar: "Yes you baked with your Mum!"
8. **Chunk instructions and information:** Break down into small steps, use **bullet points**.

### Further advice and support

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#### Useful Websites:

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD):  
The Consensus Explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ1dHS1X8jg&vl=en-GB>

Raising Awareness of DLD <https://radld.org/>

National Association of Professionals concerned with Language Impairment in Children (NAPLIC)

<https://www.naplic.org.uk/dld/>

#### Reading:

Leeds Children's SaLT:

[2143 CSLT DLD patient leaflet \(1\).pdf](#)