

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Information for teachers

What is it?

- DLD is a persistent language and communication disorder.
- It affects a person's understanding and use of language .
- It affects all languages that a person speaks.
- DLD was previously known as Specific Language Impairment (SLI)



What are the signs of DLD?

- Difficulty understanding instructions
- Word finding difficulties
- Limited vocabulary
- Difficulty understanding jokes, slang, sarcasm and non literal language e.g. 'it's raining cats and dogs'.
- Difficulty remembering information
- Difficulty paying attention in class
- Difficulty reading and decoding written information
- Difficulty making friends and maintaining friendships
- Difficulty with flexible thinking
- Difficulty understanding and regulating emotions
- Difficulty retelling events e.g. what happened at school

Behavioural difficulties such as low self-esteem or anxiety can occur alongside language difficulties



How will DLD affect my students?

DLD is an ongoing condition that can have a big impact on an individual's learning and academic progress. Students with DLD can also have difficulty with social communication. Students with DLD are often visual learners. They will understand better through visual and/or practical methods such as acting stories out or looking at pictures alongside a piece of text. Students with DLD may find practical subjects such as Physical Education, Design & Technology and Art easier. DLD looks different in each individual and specific skills may change with time.

How can you support students with DLD?

- Make sure you have the student's attention before giving an instruction or asking a question
- Use simple language and short instructions and repeat new words frequently
- Give the student time to process, find their words and express themselves
- Check the student has understood instructions and new information
- Use visuals such as pictures and gestures to support the student to remember and understand new information
- Support students to communicate in whichever way they can e.g. gesture, pointing, facial expression

Speech and Language Therapy Services in Newham

- Children with DLD in Newham may be able to access extra support from Speech and Language Therapy Services. Nursery age children can be seen by the Early Years Team at West Ham Lane Health Centre or in school / nursery if their settings buy in additional speech and language therapy. Children in Reception or above can be assessed and receive advice and recommendations for intervention from the Schools team. Some children with severe DLD attend Nelson Resource Provision or receive support from the Language Communication and Interaction Service.

Who to speak to if you have concerns

- Your school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Your school's allocated Speech and Language Therapist
- Referrals are accepted from parents/ carers, schools and GPs.



Where to find more information

Staff can find more information about DLD from the following organisations:

Afasic www.afasic.org.uk

Raising Awareness Developmental Language Disorder (RADLD) <https://radld.org/>

Talking Point <https://talkingpoint.org.uk/>

ICAN <https://www.ican.org.uk/>