








Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), or language disorder in association with a co-occurring condition is a condition that affects a child's ability to acquire and use language effectively. It is a persistent difficulty in understanding and/or using spoken or written language, which can impact various aspects of communication, including vocabulary, grammar, and overall language comprehension.

DLD is more common than most parents expect, with on average 2 children in every classroom having DLD but most going undiagnosed.

Key points:

Onset & persistence 	Typically DLD manifests in early childhood when a child is learning to speak and communicate. Challenges persist over time, affecting language development as the child grows.
Communication Difficulties 	Children have difficulty expressing themselves through speech, finding the right words, or constructing grammatically correct sentences. Understanding and processing language may also be challenging for them, making it harder to comprehend what others are saying.
Varying Severity 	Severity can vary widely among individual children. Some have mild and subtle difficulties while others are more severe.
Impact on Learning 	DLD can have implications for academic achievement, as language skills are crucial for reading, writing and overall learning. Challenges in understanding and using language may affect a child's ability to follow instructions, participate in classroom discussions, and grasp complex concepts.
Social & Emotional Impact 	Communication is a fundamental aspect of social interaction, and children with DLD may face challenges in forming and maintaining relationships with peers. Frustration and self-esteem issues can arise due to difficulties in expressing oneself effectively.
Identification & Intervention 	Early identification and intervention are crucial for addressing DLD. Individualised interventions may focus on improving vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and overall communication skills.
Support from schools/parents 	Collaboration between parents, schools and Speech therapists is essential to support a child with DLD. Consistent and patient encouragement at home, along with modifications in educational settings, can significantly contribute to a child's progress.

How can you support your child with DLD?



Understand what DLD is

By understanding what DLD is and what your child's specific needs are you can support your child.



Create a supportive environment

Be patient and count to 10. Sometimes your child will struggle to communicate what they are thinking. Give them time to express themselves and avoid finishing their sentences for them.

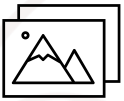
Encourage alternative means of communication when needed e.g. words, gestures, drawing and other non-verbal methods.

Model simple, short and clear sentences for your child rather than using complicated language. This will help them to process and understand better.



Engage in Language Rich Activities

Spend time doing activities which encourage language use e.g. reading, playing games, singing songs etc.



Visual Supports

Use visuals throughout your day to support your child's understanding. This can be holding up the object you are talking about, having visual timetables to help them understand what is happening, or to remember daily routines.

Use gestures and signing as an additional way for you to communicate with each other.



Work with Professionals

It is really important to work with professionals who understand and have worked with children who have DLD.

Speech therapists can provide targeted support tailored to your child's needs.

Teachers should have an awareness of DLD and can support your child with developing strategies to support themselves in and out of the classroom.



Focus on the positives and achievements

Celebrate any achievement or strengths no just in your child communication, but in other areas they excel at.

Support your child to build confidence as this will help them to develop skills and be able to use them in a positive way.

Remember your love, patience and support are the most crucial elements in helping your child with DLD navigate their world. Celebrate their progress, no matter how small, and continue to be their biggest champion.



What happens next?

Therapy is always recommended with a diagnosis of DLD. Your Speech Therapist will be able to create you a personalised program to target different areas of your child's needs. Over time those goals should be achieved, but only through consistent and clear support from all of those who are part of your child's life e.g. school/nursery, parents.

After a certain period of time your child will likely go through a similar assessment period to get quantitative evidence as to how they are getting on. The hope would be that those scores will indicate an improvement showing a range of skills have been learnt.