



Communication and Interaction Team

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

What is Developmental Language Disorder?

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a severe and persistent difficulty with understanding and/or using language. DLD affects about 7% of pupils, meaning that in a typical classroom, two pupils will have DLD, but they may not yet have been formally identified. Diagnosis of DLD is given by a speech and language therapist following a detailed assessment of their strengths and needs across six core areas; phonology; grammar; verbal learning and memory; semantics; word-finding skills and language use (pragmatics).

Pupils with DLD will need on-going support and adjustments to the delivery of the curriculum in order to achieve their potential. As well as affecting pupils' ability to access the curriculum, DLD can also have an impact on making and maintaining relationships with others, and on self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. (See One-minute guide: DLD and SEMH)

Further information about DLD and its impact on children and young people (CYP)

These websites provide further information about the signs of DLD and the ways in which it can affect CYP in terms of educational attainment, building and maintaining positive social relationships and on their wellbeing and mental health.

Supporting DLD

Consistent use of support strategies across the school can make a big difference to pupils with DLD and other SLCN. There are checklists of high-quality teaching strategies to support all pupils with communication and interaction needs within the Devon Graduated Response (DGR) tools.

See our One-Minute Guides

Strategies to support Primary pupils with SLCN

Strategies to support Secondary pupils with SLCN

<https://speechbloguk.com/10-strategies-to-support-children-with-dld/>

Identification tools

If you are concerned about a pupil's language skills, and think they may have DLD, these checklists are helpful, in addition to the DGR tools, to pinpoint particular areas of need and inform your targeted support plan.

For primary pupils

https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_ldp/SEND/C-and-I/Documents/SLCN-primary-checklist.pdf

For secondary pupils

https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/babcock_ldp/SEND/C-and-I/Documents/SLCN-secondary-checklist.doc

DGR tools

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/disadvantaged-vulnerable-learners/send/devon-graduated-response>

If you are concerned that a pupil may have significant difficulties with understanding and/or using language, please refer to your local NHS Speech and Language Therapy service for assessment and advice.

Devon

<https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/speech-language-therapy/>

Torbay

<https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy/>

Plymouth

<https://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/childrens-services/speech-and-language>

The C&I team can support you to meet the needs of any pupil with SLCN who has either been seen by the speech and language therapy team or who is waiting to be seen. Please use our usual referral pathway.



Useful resources, links and further reading:

General information about DLD

<https://www.rcslt.org/-/media/Project/RCSLT/rcslt-dld-factsheet.pdf>

Raising Awareness of DLD – information and video clips -

<https://radld.org/>

Information and support for pupils who have been diagnosed with DLD -

<https://www.dldandme.co.uk>

A young person's perspective of DLD (short video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOfkj0dj_0