



Lawns Park Primary School and Nursery A Quick Guide to DLD

What is Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)?

DLD is a brain difference. If a person has DLD it means that they find it hard to use and understand spoken language. There is no known cause of DLD and that can make it hard to explain. DLD is not caused by emotional difficulties, medical conditions, or limited exposure to language.

There are three key/ agreed criteria:

- A sense of severity - language difficulties that are not transient; it is a 'disorder' not a 'delay'.
- Affects 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 and grammar.
- Comprehension.
- Use of language (e.g., pragmatics).
- Speech sound and phonological awareness.

Implications for a pupil

How needs may present in the classroom:

- Difficulties finding the word they want to say.
- Gaps in vocabulary – struggle to learn and remember new words.
- Difficulties understanding what is being said to them.
- Immature sounding speech such as incorrect use of tenses or unusual word order.
- Greater success learning through practical activities and visual cues like pictures.
- Difficulties answering WH questions e.g., who, where and why.
- They may not understand rules of a game with peers or struggle in groups.
- Quiet in whole class situations and activities; passive learner.
- Might not get jokes, or inferences.

There are also co-occurring difficulties; a pupil with DLD may be more likely to present with other needs such as memory or attention difficulties. There is huge potential for impact on other areas such as SEMH needs (these pupils 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

1. **Pre-teaching:** key concepts and vocabulary – as a class or perhaps for a short time before lesson.
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 metaphors 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**.
9. **Colourful Semantics**

Further advice and support

Useful Websites:

Resources and free training [Educational Support for Children with Developmental Language Disorder \(DLD\) \(ican.org.uk\)](https://www.ican.org.uk/)

DLD: The Consensus Explained <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ1dHS1X8jq&v=en-GB>

Raising Awareness of DLD <https://radld.org/>
<https://www.naplic.org.uk/dld/>

[Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust - Information for Schools](#)