



The Orchid Practice
The chance to flourish

Developmental Language Disorder

DLD is a lifelong condition which affects 2 children in every class of 30. Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a diagnosis for when people experience difficulties with their understanding and/or spoken language. DLD affects children and continues to persist as children get older and become adults.

DLD can affect children's learning, such as: phonics, understanding of written text, recalling recent learning, participation in class, difficulty following instructions (may copy peers), challenges retaining vocabulary, understanding questions. It can also affect social skills, such as: following rules in playground games, children tend to interact better with younger children or adults than those their own age, children with DLD may have limited friends, they may experience challenges following conversation, understanding jokes and non-literal language. It may also affect behaviour for example, children with DLD may experience frustration, anxiety, distractibility and reduced confidence due to difficulty with comprehension.

Children with DLD may experience some or all the following difficulties: grammar, retaining vocabulary, word-finding, instructions, questions, sentence structure, categorisation skills and ability to tell/recount a narrative.

Top Tips

For Parents and Schools:

1. Explicitly teach new vocabulary e.g. using word webs to visually explain what words means e.g. what does it mean?, what group does it go into?, what does it sound like?. (see word web example).
2. Be aware of questions you ask and consider, "is this too complex of a question?"
3. Reduce background noise to help children focus their attention on what you are saying.
4. Consider sitting closer toward the front of the class.
5. Say the name of the child before giving them an instruction.
6. Give simple instructions e.g. break instructions into short steps.
7. Give them processing time by waiting for 10 seconds before prompting them to respond.
8. Repeat key information/instructions or rephrase to simplify.
9. Keep language visual. For instance, reading a story in class, show a picture to support comprehension of the stories. (See Simplify-created story map example)
10. Schools and parents can help children with DLD to find opportunities to make friendships by creating social activities which are motivating, language-light activities such as sports, baking, art etc.

More information is available on the Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder (RADLD) website <https://radld.org/>

Please contact The Orchid Practice for more support or information.

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