

Developmental Language Disorder in teenagers


Information for you



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It is thought that DLD affects seven per cent of children and young people in the general population. This is more than Autism, however, DLD is not as widely known about.

What is DLD?

DLD stands for Developmental Language Disorder. Having DLD means that you have significant ongoing difficulties understanding and/ or using spoken language, in all the languages that you use. DLD was previously known as Specific Language Impairment (SLI).

There is no known cause of DLD which can make it hard to explain. DLD is not caused by emotional difficulties or limited exposure to language.

A young person with DLD may also have other difficulties such as ADHD, Dyslexia and/ or speech sound difficulties.

DLD is not caused by other medical conditions such as hearing loss, physical impairment, Autism, severe learning difficulties or brain injuries. However, children and young people with these difficulties may also have a Language Disorder.

What signs may a teenager with DLD show?

- Difficulty understanding instructions and information.
- Limited vocabulary or difficulties finding words.
- Difficulty understanding puns, idioms, jokes, sarcasm and slang.
- Difficulty thinking flexibly.
- Difficulty remembering what has been said.
- Difficulty paying attention in class.
- Difficulty learning to read and de-code texts.
- Difficulty making friends and maintaining friendships.
- Difficulty understanding and managing emotions.
- Difficulty telling narratives – for example, saying what they did during the day or what happened at the weekend.

Remember:

Language difficulties may also lead to behavioural difficulties such as low self-esteem, anxiety or misbehaving in class.

How will this affect my young person?

DLD is a long term condition that can have a big impact on a young person's learning and achievement at school.

Teenagers with DLD may be at risk of behavioural difficulties – for example, dealing with conflict, regulating their own emotions and so on.

Sometimes DLD can affect young people's social interaction skills which can make it harder for them to make and keep friends. This can also affect employment opportunities and the mental health of these young people.



Young people with DLD usually learn and understand better through visual and/or practical methods, rather than verbal. For example, they may understand a story better if they watched it acted out rather than listening to it or reading it.

Young people with DLD may have strengths in more practical subjects at school like Physical Education (P.E), Design and Technology or Art.

How can I support my young person at home?

Get your young person's attention – say their name before asking them a question or giving them an instruction so that they know they have to listen.

Use visual clues – for example, gestures, pictures, acting things out – this will help them understand and remember things.

Use simple sentences and give them short instructions – keeping the information short and simple will help your young person understand and remember it.

Check they have understood what you have said to them/asked them.



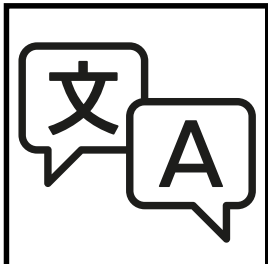
Give them time – they may need more time to process the information you have given them, to find their words and to express themselves.

Praise their effort and acknowledge what they have to say – this lets them know what they have to say is important and supports their confidence in speaking.

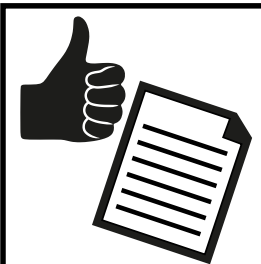
Encourage your young person to communicate with you however they can – this may include gestures, pointing and facial expressions.



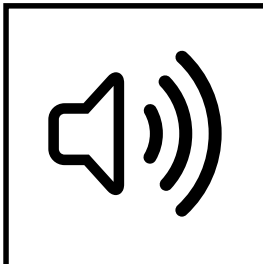
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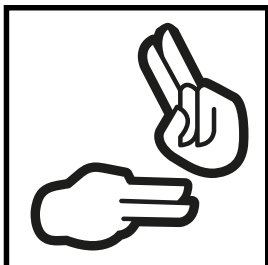
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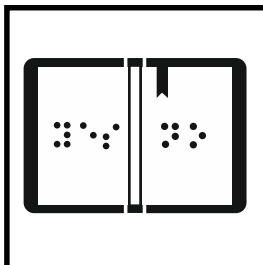
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