

DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER (DLD)

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WHAT IS DLD?

Developmental Language Disorder, often called DLD, is a lifelong condition that affects how people understand and use language.

It starts in childhood and continues into adulthood.

Children with DLD may find it hard to understand what others say and to express their own thoughts clearly.

DLD is not caused by low intelligence, hearing problems, or lack of effort. Many children with DLD are bright and want to communicate but find this difficult.

WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE?



A child with DLD may:

- Be late to start talking
- Find it hard to understand spoken language
- Have difficulty following instructions
- Struggle to find the right words
- Use short or simple sentences
- Mix up words or grammar (for example, "him go school")
- Find it hard to answer questions
- Struggle to tell stories or explain things
- Lose track in conversations
- Need extra time to process what is said

These difficulties can affect learning, friendships, and confidence.

WHAT HELPS CHILDREN WITH DLD?

You can support your child by:

KEEP LANGUAGE CLEAR AND SIMPLE

- Use short sentences
- Give one instruction at a time

GIVE EXTRA TIME

- Pause after speaking
- Allow time to think and respond

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

- Ask your child to show or explain what they need to do
- Repeat or rephrase if needed



USE VISUAL SUPPORT

- Use gestures, pictures, or objects
- Show as well as tell

PRAISE EFFORT

- Focus on communication, not mistakes
- Encourage all attempts to communicate

SUPPORT CONVERSATIONS

- Use choices instead of open questions
- Help your child take turns
- Talk about what you are doing together and name things around you

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Reduce background noise
- Gain your child's attention before speaking
- Break tasks into small steps
- Keep routines predictable

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Speak to a professional if you are concerned about your child's communication. You can contact:

- A speech and language therapist
- A teacher or early years professional
- A doctor or other health professional



KEY MESSAGE



Children with DLD can learn and succeed, but they need clear communication, patience, and the right support. Small changes in how you communicate can make a big difference every day. If you are concerned, trust your instincts and seek advice early.

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