

About Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

What is it?

Developmental Language Disorder describes someone who has difficulties talking and or understanding language. It is not a speech and language delay. DLD involves varied levels of difficulties across spoken language spanning from childhood through adulthood. DLD is a lifelong condition. This means, support is needed and children do not “just catch up”. There is no known cause for DLD and it is not linked to autism but it can be a hereditary condition.

Where is it?

DLD is sadly often hidden. DLD is not obvious and more awareness is needed across education. It affects 2 children in each classroom of 30 and still many educational professionals are not familiar with this condition. Difficulties impact all areas including communication, building and maintaining relationships and emotional wellbeing. If it goes unrecognized, it can cause issues with children into adulthood. That is why early intervention matters.

Why is it important?

DLD needs support. Support from professionals, including speech and language therapists and teachers, makes a significant difference in outcomes for children and young people and prevent further harm. It is important that DLD is identified so individuals can be adequately supported. Speech and language therapists are essential in identification and treatment for individuals with DLD. Collaboration is key and therapists must work with parents and teachers in order to ensure support is tailored and embedded. Teachers can adapt their teaching methods and incorporate visual supports which will not only help those with DLD but other children in the classroom. Support does not necessarily stop when a child leaves education. Further support to manage this condition should be considered in further education, employment and support within the workplace. Individuals with DLD can achieve their potential with the right support in place.

For more information is available on the [RADLD](https://www.radld.org/) website.