

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

FAQ for Families

What is DLD?

- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that makes learning, understanding, and using language difficult
- People with DLD struggle with learning, speaking, spelling, reading, and/or writing
- 1 in 14 children have this “hidden condition”



What does DLD look like?

- Looks differently for everyone, and symptoms may change over time
- Difficulty learning and using vocabulary (for example, may use a word incorrectly in a sentence)
- Trouble finding the right words (may describe the word they are looking for, say “it’s on the tip of my tongue...”, and/or often use vague words such as “thing,” “it,” or “stuff”)
- Challenges with sentence structure (for example may use shorter and simpler sentences than their peers)
- Difficulties with reading/listening comprehension (lower scores on reading comprehension tests, does not follow directions well)
- Trouble with oral/written/sign expression and often co-occurs with reading and writing disorders
- May not understand jokes, metaphors, or other abstract language on their own
- Trouble following and participating in a conversation, especially if the other speakers talk quickly

Impact on daily living

- Affects children and persists into adulthood
- At higher risk for lower academic performance
- Difficulty communicating puts them at risk of social isolation and bullying
- May lead to anxiety and depression
- May act out in class, because they cannot communicate well; or, in contrast, may be shy/quiet
- As adults, higher risk for less-skilled employment, unemployment, and economical disadvantage

How can I help?

- Be **patient**
- Talk **slowly**
- Use **simple language**
- **Repeat or reword** what you say to help them understand
- **Reduce distractions** in the environment
- **Advocate** for your child
 - Work with a speech-language pathologist
 - Make sure they have the necessary supports in the classroom
 - Educate others about DLD

Resources

 www.dldandme.org

 www.thedldproject.com

 www.radld.org

 www.engage-dld.com