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.theldldproject.com
www.radld.org  www.engage-dld.com

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