What every teacher needs to know about speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) with a focus on Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Who are we?

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What does I CAN do?

Design programmes
Provide training
Support families
Push for policy change
Run two outstanding schools

www.ican.org.uk
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What we will cover

• Relationship between speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and developmental language disorder (DLD)
• Identification
• Universal, targeted and specialist support, including
  • Whole school provision
  • Key targeted strategies
  • Referral to speech and language therapy
Speech, Language and Communication Needs

&

Developmental Language Disorder

Video: speech, language and communication needs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG50fv-B3Uk
Long-term speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) 10%

Dyslexia 10%

Conduct disorder (severe behaviour difficulties) 6%

Learning disability 2%

Severe ADHD 2%

Autism 1%

7.6% = developmental language disorder (DLD)

This increases to one in four for those children living in disadvantaged areas in the UK.
Without skills in speaking and understanding, children will struggle

- To make friends
- To learn
- To have good mental health
- To get a job

Why does it matter?

93% of children with developmental language disorder have literacy difficulties

Young people with a language difficulty are four times less likely to get good GCSEs

81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have significant language deficits, often unidentified

60% of young offenders have low language skills
The terminology issue

Language disorder

“Speaking and understanding language”

Specific Language Impairment (SLI)

DLD

Language delay

Language difficulties

Children may have difficulty speaking and understanding language for many different reasons...

“Delayed” language

Language difficulties due to a lack of communication-rich experiences

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Lifelong language difficulties

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Language disorder associated with another diagnosed condition
Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

"Delayed" language

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

= difficulties with speaking or understanding language

The communication chain

1. Notice someone is speaking to you
2. Focus attention and listen
3. Hear the words and understand them
4. Understand the sentences
5. Read other person's expression and body language
6. Get the meaning
7. Have an idea about what to say
8. Know what's appropriate
9. Find the words in your memory
10. Make sentences to say
11. Choose the right expression and body language to use
12. Programme your speech muscles
13. Speak
14. Check other person's expression and body language
Identification:
What does it look like in the classroom?

What might it look like in the classroom?
What does it look like?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAsf_Wqjz4g

How to identify

https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/universally-speaking/

https://ican.org.uk/shop/progression-tools-from-the-communication-trust-for-primary-years-set/

https://ican.org.uk/shop/progression-tools-from-the-communication-trust-for-secondary-years-set/
How to identify

https://ican.org.uk/shop/whats-typical-talk-at-primary-poster/

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Learning more than one language  Speech, language or communication need

SLCN affects BOTH / ALL languages
Universal, targeted and specialist support

- All students need this
- Students who need support to access the curriculum
- Students with most complex level of need

DIAGNOSIS

Universal
Targeted
Specialist
A Whole School Approach

Planning for language issues

All teachers are teachers of communication

Every interaction is an opportunity

Assume the worst

Using SLTs

Create the right environment

Language explicit in planning

Create the right environment

Visual Support

Reduce background noise

Seating arrangements

Universal

Create the right environment

Visual Support

Reduce background noise

Seating arrangements

Universal
Create the right environment

Communication friendly environments – checklist
You can use this simple checklist to think about how your environment supports children’s communication.

Elements to consider
- Space, light and layout
  - Is there good light, with a comfortable temperature and not too many visual distractions
- Noise levels
  - Are noise levels conducive to learning – what can be done to minimise unnecessary noise?
- Use of visual support, this may include
  - A colour coded map of school or setting, colour coded directions, photographs of staff members, photographs/symbols used to support routines, e.g washing hands, getting ready for PE

- **Routines**
  - Are children aware of rules and expectations?
  - Do they know daily routines, could there be supported visually?
  - Are children given opportunities within lessons to say when they don’t understand?
  - Are they explicitly taught how to listen, how to work together in groups?
  - Are there opportunities for children to interact and use language in different situations, with different people at an appropriate level?

https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/more-resources/communication-friendly-checklists/

Adapt your language

Time
- Slow down...pause
- So they can think and put their words together

Simple instructions

Use familiar vocabulary

Every interaction is an opportunity
Teach vocabulary

- ** Explicitly teach vocabulary **
- ** Review often **
- ** Link to other words they know **
- ** Use visual prompts and supports **
- ** Teach tier 2 words **

Encourage asking for help

- Create a **safe environment**
- **Praise** asking questions and asking for help

**Did they understand you?**

- Check whole class instructions individually
- Check in with them throughout activity/lesson
I CAN programmes

- Classroom environment checklist
- 12 key strategies: cross-curricular examples
- Resources and templates to adapt

Targeted support: for children with SLCN / DLD

- All students need this
- Students with most complex level of need
- Students who need support to access the curriculum

Students

Universal

Targeted

Specialist
Targeted tools and programmes

Targeted strategies: differentiation

Planning for language issues
Blank’s levels of questioning

**Level 1:** Here and now
- What’s that?
- Who is it?
- Where is X?
- Find one like this

**Level 2:** More detailed here and now, describing things
- What’s happening?
- Find something that is a... (category)
- How are these different?

**Level 3:** Stories and events
- How does she feel?
- How are these the same?
- What’s happening next?

**Level 4:** Analysing & reasoning
- Why...
- How could he...
- What will happen if...

Targeted strategies: more visual supports

- Provide **visual structures/templates** to help structure written work
- **Word banks** e.g. of connectives, past tense verbs, adjectives
- Can use a visual **checklist** for editing and to support independence


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Ask them!

What would they find helpful?
- Vocab glossary
- Print-out of powerpoints
- Task flow chart

Targeted Planning for language issues

Specialist support

- Speech and language therapy
- Specialist advisory teacher
- Some students may have EHCP with funding (many children with DLD will not)
Speech and language therapy support may include:

- Assessment and diagnosis
- Support with the EHCP process (if appropriate)
- Devise and/or deliver programmes of therapy (direct or indirect)
- Support at particular times e.g. transition
- Advise/coach parents/carers, teachers, and teaching assistants in the use of specific strategies
- Raise awareness and understanding of diagnosis
- Teach child strategies to help reduce the impact of their difficulties
- Increase child’s awareness to help develop self-esteem/advocacy

Some children’s difficulties are life-long and cannot be “fixed”

How to get the most out of speech and language therapy support

Work collaboratively – to impact on classroom practice

Work with SaLT when support required at key times e.g. transition – and do not be afraid to re-refer!

Ensure support staff have opportunities for coaching and observation with SaLT
Key messages

1. Acknowledge the problem
2. Identification
3. Whole school approach – universal, targeted, specialist
4. Quality first teaching
5. Strategic use of therapy time

Further support from I CAN

Resources for parents and practitioners
https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/

Speak to a speech and language therapist
0207 8432544 enquiries@ican.org.uk
Further support from I CAN

In addition to the above, we are pleased to offer a series of pre-recorded webinars for teachers and school leaders which you can access below.

www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources

Keep in touch

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