

# Speech, Language and Communication Toolkit

Information and guidance for mainstream primary schools

## Specialist Support



Part of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Partnership  
Programme across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

# Specialist Support and When to Refer

## Who do Speech and Language Therapists Help?

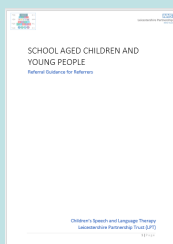
The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland NHS Speech and Language Therapy service provide assessments, diagnoses and episodes of care to meet the needs of children and young people who have a significant SLCN.

- The service is open to all children with a registered GP within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) aged from 0 to 19 years
- SLCN referrals will only be accepted when they show evidence of a significant impact on the child or young person and evidence of universal strategies being implemented and found insufficient to meet need or lead to progress.
- SLCN referrals for **language** needs will only be accepted when they include evidence of **universal** strategies *and* **targeted** interventions (as outlined in this Toolkit) being implemented and found insufficient to meet need or lead to progress

## Referral Guidelines

Referrals are accepted when the child/ young person will benefit from an episode of care from this specialist service for one of the following reasons:

- Speech sound difficulties e.g. children whose speech is unclear/difficult to understand.
- Significant communication difficulties in the context of complex needs, such as an absence of spoken words and/ or inability to understand spoken words
- Language difficulties impacting on daily communication, including communication for learning e.g. difficulties understanding spoken language or difficulties using words and sentences.
- Voice difficulties and Stammering (a difficulty with speaking fluently)



Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - [SLT referral guidelines](#)

Educational settings can refer using our referral guidelines.

Use this Toolkit to collate evidence to support onward referrals if required. A referral for specialist support will only be accepted if there is evidence that universal and targeted approaches (as outlined in this Toolkit) are not adequately supporting the child.

For safeguarding concerns, go to: [Safeguarding Children in Leicestershire and Rutland](#) or [Rutland County Council- Children, young people and families](#).

To be accepted, your referral will need to include the following:


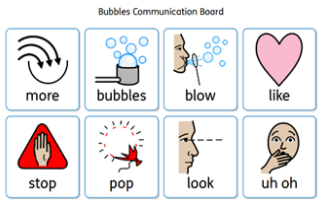
Communication profile - results of <a href="#">Screening Tools</a> . Include examples wherever possible.	"Jack appears to have appropriate attention and listening, speech, voice, and fluency, however there are concerns regarding his understanding and use of language. For example, he has difficulties following instructions in the classroom, and his sentences are muddled".
Strategies and interventions implemented, and how the child responded.	<p>"Jack appears to find the visual supports in the classroom helpful e.g. he often uses the task planners. However, he still frequently asks the teacher what he's supposed to do.</p> <p>Jack has been part of a Colourful Semantics group for the past term, and has made some small steps of progress, however he is having difficulty progressing beyond 'who-doing' sentences."</p>
Functional impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Accessing the curriculum</li><li>● Social skills</li><li>● Emotional wellbeing</li></ul>	<p>"Jack appears aware of his difficulties with language and can seem withdrawn in the classroom. He can have difficulties joining in with his peers because he cannot always understand their games. He was recently in trouble for damaging some school property.</p> <p>Whilst it seemed Jack felt there was a good reason this had happened; he was unable to describe what had happened in a way teaching staff could understand. He is frequently unable to express himself clearly."</p>
Related needs and challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sensory needs (e.g. visual, hearing)</li><li>● Cognitive profile (e.g. memory)</li><li>● Mental health</li><li>● Learning difficulties</li></ul>	"Jack is working below expected levels for his reading and writing. He has had a recent hearing test and passed this."
Other professionals involved e.g. Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Specialist Teaching Services.	"Jack has had a recent Educational Psychology assessment; the report is attached".





# Using signs and symbols to support communication

Signs and symbols are often recommended for children with SLCN. These resources can support you whilst you wait for support from a specialist team, either from health or the local authority. Prior to the implementation of the below, ensure that you have embedded the strategies and approaches in the targeted support toolkit.

<b>Choice Boards</b>  A choice board contains symbols, pictures or photos of things a child may want to ask for. This could include things such as toys and food. Follow the link for more information and video demonstration: Health for Kids - <a href="#">How to use Choice Boards</a>	 <p>A Toy Choice Board with six icons: a red ball, a blue train, a pink doll, a blue car, a yellow puzzle, and a pink bottle of bubbles.</p>
<b>Communication Boards</b>  A communication board is a sheet of symbols, pictures or photos that a child will learn to point to, to communicate with those around them. Health for Kids - <a href="#">How to use Communication Boards</a>	 <p>A Bubbles Communication Board with eight icons: a hand pointing to a circle (more), a cup of bubbles (bubbles), a person blowing bubbles (blow), a heart (like), a hand with a stop sign (stop), a hand popping a bubble (pop), a person looking (look), and a person saying 'uh oh'.</p>
<b>Signing</b>  Some children benefit from sign-supported communication (e.g. Makaton).	Health for Kids - <a href="#">How to use signing</a>  Makaton - <a href="#">Training and Information</a>
<b>Objects of Reference</b>  Using tangible objects linked to specific activities (e.g. a cup for snack time) to support understanding.	Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - <a href="#">Objects of Reference</a>
<b>Talking Mats</b>  A Talking Mat is a visual communication framework which supports people with communication difficulties to express their feelings and views. Following official training, adults can use this approach to gather a child or young person's voice during decision making. Follow the link for more information, resources and training.	TalkingMats - <a href="#">Resources</a>

## Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

### What is DLD?

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a condition where children experience **long-term difficulties** with speaking and/or understanding language. While they may have many ideas, they often find it difficult to express them or to understand what others say. These challenges can be subtle and may go unnoticed for a long time. DLD is a neurodevelopmental condition (like Dyslexia or Autism). The exact cause is unknown, however there is thought to be some genetic link as DLD is more likely to run in families.

- Developmental: Starts in childhood (but does not go away)
- Language: Words and sentences, understanding and/or talking
- Disorder: Something not as expected

DLD is common. 7.6% of children have DLD – that's an average of 2 children in every class of 30!

DLD is a hidden disability and affects every person differently. It is a lifelong condition, and children do not grow out of it. Learn more about DLD, and how it might appear in the classroom, using the resources below:

Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder (RADLD) - [Factsheet](#), [DLD Bubble Resource](#), [YouTube Channel](#), [Awareness Day](#).



National Association for Professionals Concerned with Language Impairment in Children (NAPLIC) - [DLD Resources for Schools](#), [Top Tips for Schools](#).

Speech and Language Org - [DLD Guide for Schools](#), [Webinar links](#).

Think Language, Think DLD



Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) Day video.

## What you might observe

Difficulties understanding language, including:

- Difficulties following instructions
- Needing extra processing time
- Difficulties learning new vocabulary
- Difficulties remembering what you have told them

Difficulties using language, including:

- Using short sentences with missing words, muddled word order or immature grammar
- Using non-specific language (thing/ stuff), and presenting with word finding difficulties
- Difficulties explaining things that have happened or telling a story
- Mistakes in pronunciation of words, especially longer words

## The impact of these difficulties

- Difficulties with literacy and reading comprehension
- Difficulties with academic attainment
- Difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with peers
- Behavioural difficulties
- Mental health difficulties

But, with the right support, children and young people with DLD can do very well. Watch the video below to learn more about how we can support children to 'grow with DLD'. **Where there are concerns a child may be presenting with DLD, refer to the Speech and Language Therapy Service so specialist assessment can be completed.**

DEVELOPMENTAL  
LANGUAGE  
DISORDER



RADLD - Growing with DLD video.