

ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER (DLD)



Language skills are a combination of talking, listening, understanding, reading and writing. Learners combine these skills with body language and other non-verbal cues to develop their understanding of language. When learners haven't developed these skills in the expected pattern at the expected age, it may be due to a developmental language disorder (DLD).

Each learner with DLD is a unique individual and adjustments to their educational program and learning environment should be tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of DLD on the individual learner, you'll be better able to adjust to their needs.



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education

Understanding DLD

A DLD is a life-long neurodevelopmental condition affecting approximately 7% of the population. This means there may be at least 2 learners with a DLD in any group of learners.

A DLD will impact a learner's social development by reducing their ability to communicate effectively, form and maintain friendships, and use the problem-solving skills essential for negotiation and conflict resolution.

Cultural considerations

Different cultures have different sound systems and language structures, and learners use their sound knowledge to overlay their first language onto the new language they are trying to learn, such as English.

If it's identified that an EALD learner is having difficulties with their first language as well as English, then an assessment for a DLD may be needed.

Impact of DLD on oral language development

A learner with DLD can have difficulties in oral receptive or expressive language, or both.

Receptive language issues can cause:

- difficulty following instructions
- attention problems
- difficulty responding to questions
- misunderstanding written language.

Expressive language issues mean the learner can have difficulty:

- naming or labelling objects in the environment
- describing actions and events
- putting words together in sentences, and may use made up words or produce 'muddled' sentences
- responding to questions.

Strengths of learners with DLD

The strengths of learners with developmental language disorder can be:

- creative and eager to learn
- adaptability
- using sensory information to understand instructions
- using visual strategies.

DLD ADJUSTMENTS



EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



Collaborating with families or carers and a speech pathologist

- You will need to collaborate with the learner and their family or carers to build a trusting relationship and get to know the learner's strengths, interests, needs, language, culture, developmental level, social understanding and emotional capacity.
- The speech pathologist will identify the impact of a DLD and should provide a range of strategies that can be used as adjustments. There may be a range of recommendations and you'll collaborate to prioritise which goals to work on first.



General approach to learners with DLD

- Help learners with DLD increase their skills by developing language for function as well as language for interaction.
- Create a language friendly learning environment.
- Offer flexible learning activities and assessments so the learner can demonstrate their understanding.



Targeted language support

Deliver activity-based sharing through:

- speaking and listening (talking to peers and adults in authentic and functional ways)
- reflection (reflect and communicate accomplishments)
- social or learning interactions (formal and informal interactions that require different language styles).



Focus on Aboriginal learners

Aboriginal languages have different sound systems and language structures to Standard Australian English.

Note that urban Aboriginal communities will have different language features to those in a remote area. Urban communities are more likely to speak Aboriginal English or Standard Australian English whereas remote communities speak complex traditional languages and dialects (for example Pitjantjatjara, Yankuntjatjara).