



Professionals supporting language  
and communication development

## **Developmental Language Disorder: Take a second look**

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a condition in which children or adults have problems understanding and/or using spoken language. On average around two children in every classroom have DLD, but it can be hard to spot. If a child presents with literacy, learning or mental health issues then it is worth taking a second look. It could be DLD.

### **Literacy**

There are strong links between language and literacy. Being a good reader and writer relies on strong language skills in order to decode print, understand what is being read and sequence/organise written text. So, if a child is struggling with literacy, there is a strong possibility of an underlying difficulty with language.

### **Learning**

In school, nearly all teaching and learning relies on some aspect of speech, language and communication. If a child is struggling in class and is not making the expected progress, it may be difficulties with language which are affecting their ability to understand and engage.

### **Mental Health**

There is a well-evidenced relationship between speech, language and communication and mental health. For instance young people with DLD are at high risk of depression and anxiety. Students with behavioural difficulties often have their language difficulties missed, so if a student presents with challenging behaviour always investigate their language.

<https://www.naplic.org.uk/resource/depression-and-anxiety-change-from-adolescence-to-adulthood-in-individuals-with-and-without-language-impairment/>

**Find out more at [www.naplic.org.uk/dld](http://www.naplic.org.uk/dld)**