

## Brooke Weston Trust Primary SEND Newsletter—May 2023

This term's SEND newsletter is about SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs). It details the importance of developing skills and also the difficulties that some children may encounter. Please read through the information and if you feel that your child could possibly be demonstrating some difficulties please arrange a meeting with your child's teacher and/or the SENDCo to seek further advice and guidance.

### Speech and Language

Children learn to talk through hearing and seeing others, and this starts very early, even before birth. As with all areas of children's development we have typical milestones for children when they are learning to talk. Usually children's understanding develops before their talking, so we expect young children to be able to understand more than they can say.

Some children may find communication difficult and this can be for a number of reasons.

There are lots of things that we know are good for helping children's language and communication skills to develop. These are helpful for all children, not only those that are late to get going with their talking.

- Get your child's full attention first. Get down to their level before speaking or asking a question— say their name and encourage them to stop and listen.
- Help them to develop their listening skills, as these are really important for children when they are learning to talk.
- Give time for them to respond. Children often need time to put their thoughts together before they answer and need longer to respond than you would with an adult.

Some children may be diagnosed with Developmental language disorder (DLD) it is a condition where children have problems understanding and/or using spoken language. There is no obvious reason for these difficulties, for example, there is no hearing problem or physical disability that explains them. In the past DLD was known as specific language impairment (SLI) but recently the name has changed so that it better reflects the types of difficulties children have. A child can be diagnosed with DLD if their language difficulties:

- are likely to carry on into adulthood
- have a significant impact on progress at school, or on everyday life
- are unlikely to catch up without help



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DLD looks different in all children and can be complicated to understand because we don't really know the cause. Scientists think that the part of the brain responsible for speech and language might be wired a little differently from that of a person with more typical language development— but differences are subtle and won't show up on a brain scan. We also know that genes play an important part in DLD, but there is no medical test to see if a child has it or not. Studies have shown that in five year olds, DLD affects about two children in every classroom in primary school (about 7.6%) and that it is more common in boys than girls.

# Developing a communication rich environment

There are lots of simple things you can do at home that will help to support your child's communication skills. What is most important for you to focus on is the fact that you are the most important person in every environment that you share with your child and in particular, when you are at home together. You can use the range of top tips that are recommended for all adults when talking with children.

Here are some suggestions of things you can do easily at home.

- Get your child's attention first before speaking or having a conversation. It often helps to get down to their level first whenever possible – this means having your face at the same level as theirs.
- Use simple, repetitive language. This works best if you try to keep your sentences nice and short, particularly for much younger children.
- Use a full range of expression. This means speaking in a lively, animated voice and using some gestures and lots of facial expressions to make your words even more interesting.
- Try to reduce as much background distraction as you can, so doing things like switching the TV off can really help! Background noise can make it harder for children to pick up on new words. This is important because learning new words helps children to be able to use longer sentences.
- Following your child's interest is also good for supporting their listening and talking. It helps if we show that we are paying attention and listening to them too. This really encourages children to pay attention and to listen to us as more. We can do this really easily as they play with a toy or carry out an activity. So don't be tempted to jump in; let them lead the play.



**Speech and  
Language UK** 

There is a wealth of information including further information sheets detailing further support for Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties on the Speech and Language UK website.

**SAVE THE DATE | #DLDDAY 2023 FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 2023 Developmental Language Disorder is a hidden but common disability that affects 1 in 14 people causing difficulties understanding and using language for no known reason.**

## **Further information:**

Speech and Language UK—<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk>

The Schools SEND information report can be found at : <https://www.oakleyvaleprimary.org/page/?title=Equalities%2FSEND&pid=49>

The Local Offer can be found at: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/send/local-offer/Pages/default.aspx>

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