



# Speech, Language & Communication Needs

## Educational Psychology Service & Speech and Language Therapy Service

*This leaflet has been designed to support parents and educators to understand and identify speech, language and communication needs and linked factsheets give advice on how to best support these needs at home.*

### What are Speech, Language and Communication Needs?



Speech, Language and Communication Needs or 'SLCN' describes the difficulties children can experience in lots of areas of their communication.

Some SLCN are short term and some can remain throughout childhood and into adulthood. A child may have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as a result of another diagnosis such as autism, brain injury or learning disabilities or often there is no cause at all. A child can also have language difficulties alongside other needs such as dyslexia, ADHD or learning difficulties. Children can have difficulties in one or lots of areas of their communication.

### Speech Sound Difficulties

Speech Sounds are the sounds that we use in words. A child with a speech sound difficulty may struggle to learn, remember or use these sounds correctly. This can make it difficult for other people to understand them. Speech sounds begin to develop from birth and a child can typically say most sounds by the age of 4 years. Some sounds take a little bit longer and by 8 years, most children have mastered all sounds. By the age of 5 years, a stranger should be able to understand what your child is saying.

**Speech sound difficulties might look like:**

**A child over 5yrs that cannot be understood by new people/those outside of the family**

**Missing out sounds completely eg. 'og' instead of 'dog'**

**Child becoming frustrated if other's can't understand them**

**Changing the way they say a sound eg. lispings**

**Substitution of incorrect sounds in place of correct sound in words - eg. 'tea' instead of 'sea'**

**Adding in sounds where they dont belong eg. 'perlay' instead of 'play'**

### Expressive Language Difficulties

Expressive language difficulties are when a child struggles to use spoken words and sentences to express themselves and get their message across.

**Expressive language difficulties might look like:**

**Not using as many words as they should eg. they may not use recognisable words or only a few words together**

**Muddling up the order of words in a sentence**

**Not talking as much as other children their age or struggling to find words and use a varied vocabulary**

**Struggling to answer questions or tell you what they have been doing**

**Using sentences that sound immature or like that of a younger child**

**Not being able to use sentences to tell stories, share news or give instructions**



# Receptive Language Difficulties

Receptive language is another word for understanding. Receptive language difficulties are when a child struggles to understand the meaning of spoken words and sentences.



Receptive difficulties might look like:

Not following instructions fully

Being very passive or even disruptive

Copying other children rather than doing tasks by themselves

Forgetting what they have been asked to do

Not understanding or remembering longer pieces of information eg. stories

Not 'getting' jokes or sarcasm

# Vocabulary and Word Finding Difficulties



Vocabulary refers to the words that we understand and use. Some children have difficulty understanding or using as many words as they should in their speech and/or writing to express themselves. If a child understands lots of words but is unable to use them correctly when they're talking, we can call this a word finding difficulty. Word finding involves retrieving the right word in our brain at the right time when we need it.



Vocabulary and word finding difficulties might look like:

Describing rather than naming items

'Going around the houses' and use lots of words to describe what they mean

Using empty phrases containing no real information eg. 'he's doing that' rather than 'the boy is posting the letter'

Relying heavily on actions when they are explaining something to you

Using slightly incorrect words eg. 'Daddy's sweeping the dog'

Having difficulty remembering the meaning of words

# Developmental Language Disorder

Sometimes when a child has significant language difficulties and no known diagnosis, they may have a Developmental Language Disorder or 'DLD' for short. Children with DLD have language difficulties that significantly impact on their learning and ability to participate in the world around them. A diagnosis of DLD can be made by a Speech and Language Therapist.

## Useful Websites

[www.boltonft.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-for-children/](http://www.boltonft.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-for-children/)

[www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)

[www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)

[www.ican.org](http://www.ican.org)

[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

[www.RADLD.org](http://www.RADLD.org)

[www.DLDandme.co.uk](http://www.DLDandme.co.uk)

# Who can help if I think my child has SLCN?

💡 Speak to your child's class teacher or SENCo about how they can support your child with their speech, language and communication.

💡 Look at the strategies which are provided with this leaflet for advice on how to support your child's speech, language and communication needs at home.

💡 Review the impact of using the strategies and if the concern persists make a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy service (SALT).

[www.bolton.gov.uk](http://www.bolton.gov.uk) [boltoncouncil](https://www.facebook.com/boltoncouncil) [boltoncouncil](https://twitter.com/boltoncouncil)

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Accountable, determined, making a difference, honest and respectful. We work together.



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