

DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER

FOR PARENTS: WHAT IS DLD?

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) describes children who have difficulties that affect how they understand and use language.



These language difficulties:

- start in childhood and can continue into adulthood
- significantly impact communication at school, home and everyday life
- are not explained by another diagnosis such as Autism, intellectual disability or brain injury
- can occur with some other disorders such as ADHD and dyslexia
- can be helped by specialist interventions, although it may take a long time.

WHO DOES DLD AFFECT?

- DLD is very common. It is estimated DLD affects 1 in 14 children - **that's 2 children in every classroom.**
- DLD can occur with ADHD and dyslexia.

WHAT CAUSES DLD?

- There is no known cause for DLD. Sometimes DLD runs in families.
- Learning more than one language does not cause DLD, however difficulties will be present in all languages the child is exposed to. Children with DLD can learn more than one language, but it may take them longer.

WHAT DOES DLD LOOK LIKE?

Children with DLD may have difficulties with:

- **Language content:** how ideas, events, actions and relationships are communicated.
- **Language form:** the way sounds, words and sentences are organised so they make sense.
- **Language use:** the social rules for communication, such as turn taking and using eye contact.

WHAT ARE LDCs?

Children with DLD benefit from teachers, and education assistants who are trained and supported by speech pathologists. Language Development Centres (LDCs) are independent public schools for children who have DLD and meet the eligibility criteria. Children must be referred to an LDC by a speech pathologist and a school psychologist or paediatrician. Referrals are due in September each year, for placement the following year.

Eligible students attend the LDC instead of their local mainstream school, and receive a specialised language program along with the WA curriculum. The NEMLDC caters for children in Kindergarten to Year 2, for a **maximum of three years**. Children then transition to their local school.

MORE INFORMATION?

- To find out more about DLD contact the **NEMLDC & Outreach Service** on 9218 1600 or visit our website at <http://northeastldc.wa.edu.au/>.
- The **Child Development Service (CDS)** provides free services for children in the Perth metropolitan area. Information about referrals can be found here <https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/our-services/community-health/child-development-service>
- **Private speech pathologists** can be located through the Speech Pathology Australia website at www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au or the Private Speech Pathologists Association of Western Australia at www.pspawa.com.au.

More information about DLD can be found here: <https://radld.org/>