



Supporting the 1 in 14 students  
with Developmental Language Disorder

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. I pay my respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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ABOUT ME



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**THE DLD PROJECT**



Extensive and evolving research tells us what works best for people with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) but unfortunately these learnings and insights sit in the hands of a few.

The DLD Project addresses these roadblocks by establishing an online platform to distribute evidence-based information, resources and training.

We believe the saying "it takes a village" is the best way to describe our model of engaging families, educators and health professionals to work in partnership to change the lifelong outlook for people with DLD. Everyone has an important role to play.

In addition to offering lots of free and paid tools and resources to support the Australian DLD community, a portion of proceeds goes to funding game changing DLD advocacy and research initiatives.

[www.TheDLDProject.com](http://www.TheDLDProject.com)    [sham@TheDLDProject.com](mailto:sham@TheDLDProject.com)    [f](#) [@](#) [t](#)    **Connect with us**

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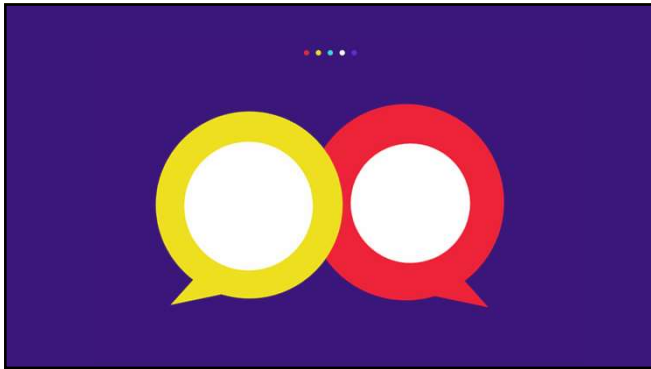
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**WHAT IS DLD?**

**DLD**  
is a developmental condition that causes difficulties with understanding and/or talking

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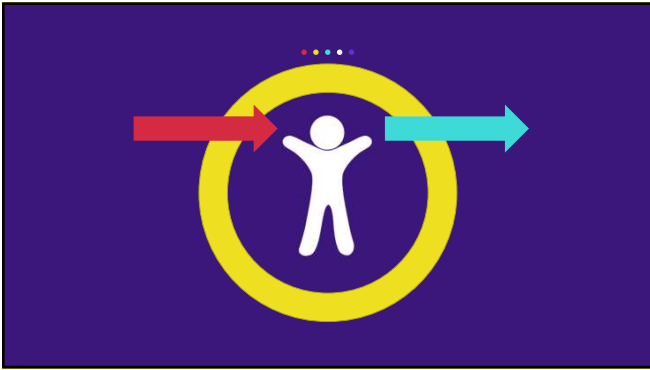
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WHAT IS DLD?



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CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

- Adaptive behaviours & emotional disorders
- ADHD
- Auditory processing disorder
- Cognition
- Developmental coordination disorder
- Sensory processing
- Specific learning disorders (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia)
- Speech sound disorders

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“DLD feels like everything is going over my head all the time. When I talk, it feels a bit like I'm about to stutter. Everything rushes to your mouth at once. I have to stop the sentence and restart or move onto something else. My mates don't really notice, but I do.”



12

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### POEM BY ELLEN

A funny thing happens when I get to my school, an invisibility cloak is my educational tool. Most people forget me as if it's a rule, but I have eyes and ears so they are the fool!

A funny thing happens during my time in school, people speak about me, instead of to me which is cruel, work is forgotten and homeworks not marked but I've still eyes and ears so this makes me marked!

A funny thing happens to me in my school as I am often treated as though I'm the fool. The bar is set low and there are lots of mistakes yet no one says sorry, which causes me heart ache.

A funny thing could happen to me in my school that the adults there could actually follow the rules, allow me to mix and dream big for my future, after all it's meant to be an all inclusive culture.

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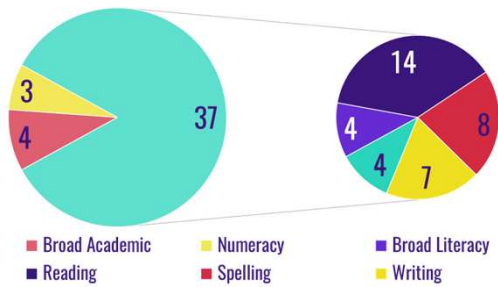
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### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



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### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Students with DLD are at risk of failing at school

They have difficulties across all areas of the curriculum

Some achieve within the average range in academic tasks

Ziegenfusz et al., 2022

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### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- **Reading, spelling & writing** – students with DLD presented with skills similar to their younger typically developing peers.
- **Narratives** – students with DLD had more difficulties with understanding, generating and retelling stories.
- **Numeracy** – students with DLD demonstrated greater success when the language load was reduced

Ziegenfusz et al., 2022

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### SIMPLE VIEW OF READING



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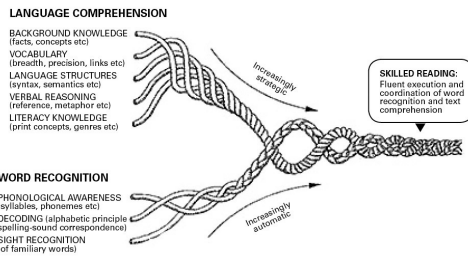
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### READING ROPE

The Many Strands that are Woven into Skilled Reading (Scarborough 2001)



Scarborough, 2001

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**EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**



**TEACHERS**

- Reading for enjoyment
- Handwriting

- Reading for understanding
- Story writing
- Writing for tests
- Writing tasks
- Reading for tests
- Taking tests
- Planning for assignments
- Doing tests

**ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

- Reading for enjoyment
- Doing homework

**PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

- Handwriting
- Completing tasks

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**CLASSROOM STRATEGIES**

- Make language as tactile and visible as possible
- Giving instructions:
  - Use cuing strategies to ensure they are listening
  - Slow down your rate of delivery (slightly)
  - Chunk information
  - Put information in chronological order
  - Be specific and concise
- Give students more time to process and respond
- Encourage them to ask for repetitions or clarification
- Make the implicit, explicit (e.g. describe what is happening)




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**CLASSROOM STRATEGIES**

- Explicitly teach (or pre-teach) concepts
- Provide multiple repetitions of vocabulary
- Create banks of words or word walls
- Build up definitions of new words
- Use new words in a variety of ways




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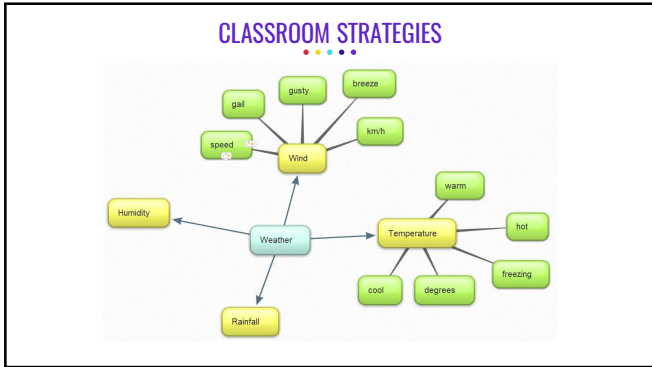
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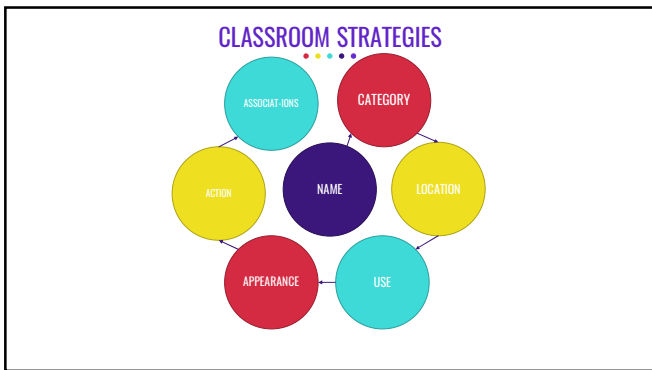
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- CLASSROOM STRATEGIES**
- Literacy instruction will help build language
  - Recast incorrect spoken grammar (if written, correct the mistake)
  - Teach the different types of words (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions)
  - Extend spoken and written language (e.g. adjectives, conjunctions)
  - Encourage structuring thoughts before undertaking writing tasks (e.g. drawing)

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### CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

- Consider the language you use in the classroom
- Pair verbal information with written information
- Consider how to reduce the cognitive load of tasks
- Make adjustments to the learning tasks AND assessment tasks
- Build a partnership with the student
- Support their mental health



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### WORKING WITH OLDER CHILDREN

- Focus on academic support
- Make written language more accessible (e.g. breaking up information, visual aids, alternatives to text)
- Focus on functional skills (e.g. reading timetables, job interviews)
- Explore special provisions for internal and external examinations
- Investigate technology (e.g. smart phone, Microsoft)
- Support their mental health – talk about emotional language and relationships

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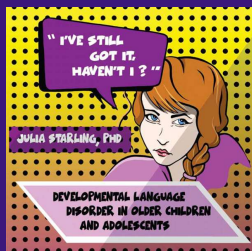
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### WORKING WITH OLDER CHILDREN



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# HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO MY WORK?

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## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Who are the students in my school that may have DLD?
- How can I change the way I provide instructions to support students with DLD?
- What visual strategies do I or could I use to scaffold student learning?
- What should I look for that might indicate a student is having trouble understanding?
- What formative or summative assessments provide evidence regarding a student's listening or written comprehension?
- What steps can I take to help with communication breakdowns?

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## KEY MESSAGES

- DLD is one of the most common developmental conditions in childhood
- If you have concerns about a student's communication, academic or behaviour skills, consult with a speech pathologist
- Teacher, speech pathologist and parent/caregiver collaboration can support high quality instruction for school-aged children
- Recognise each student with DLD has a unique profile of strengths and areas of need
- All students can learn, but will require individualised approaches.

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**RESOURCES**

- The DLD Project – [www.TheDLDProject.com](http://www.TheDLDProject.com)
- Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder – [www.radld.org](http://www.radld.org)
- DLDandMe – [www.DLDandMe.org](http://www.DLDandMe.org)
- NAPLIC – [www.naplic.org.uk](http://www.naplic.org.uk)
- The Communication Trust – <https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/>
- Marleen Westerveld – [www.marleenwesterveld.com](http://www.marleenwesterveld.com)
- Language and Learning in Young People – [www.languageandliteracyinyoungpeople.com](http://www.languageandliteracyinyoungpeople.com)
- See Hear Speak Podcast – [www.seehearspeakpodcast.com](http://www.seehearspeakpodcast.com)
- Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developmental\\_language\\_disorder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developmental_language_disorder)
- Webwords 60 - DLD - [https://speech-language-therapy.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=183-ww60&catid=13&Itemid=101](https://speech-language-therapy.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=183-ww60&catid=13&Itemid=101)
- DUCD Winter Lecture 2017 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBehC8Zwhh0>
- Making Sense of Interventions for Children with Developmental Disorders – by Caroline Bowen and Pamela Snow
- Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) briefings
- SPA Communication Milestones poster
- Social media #DevLangDis

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CONNECT WITH US




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