

TALK Difficulties

Guidance for Early Years Professionals



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Communication is essential

In the early years setting many aspects of learning and development are dominated by language and communication, from group time in the nursery to games outside with friends.

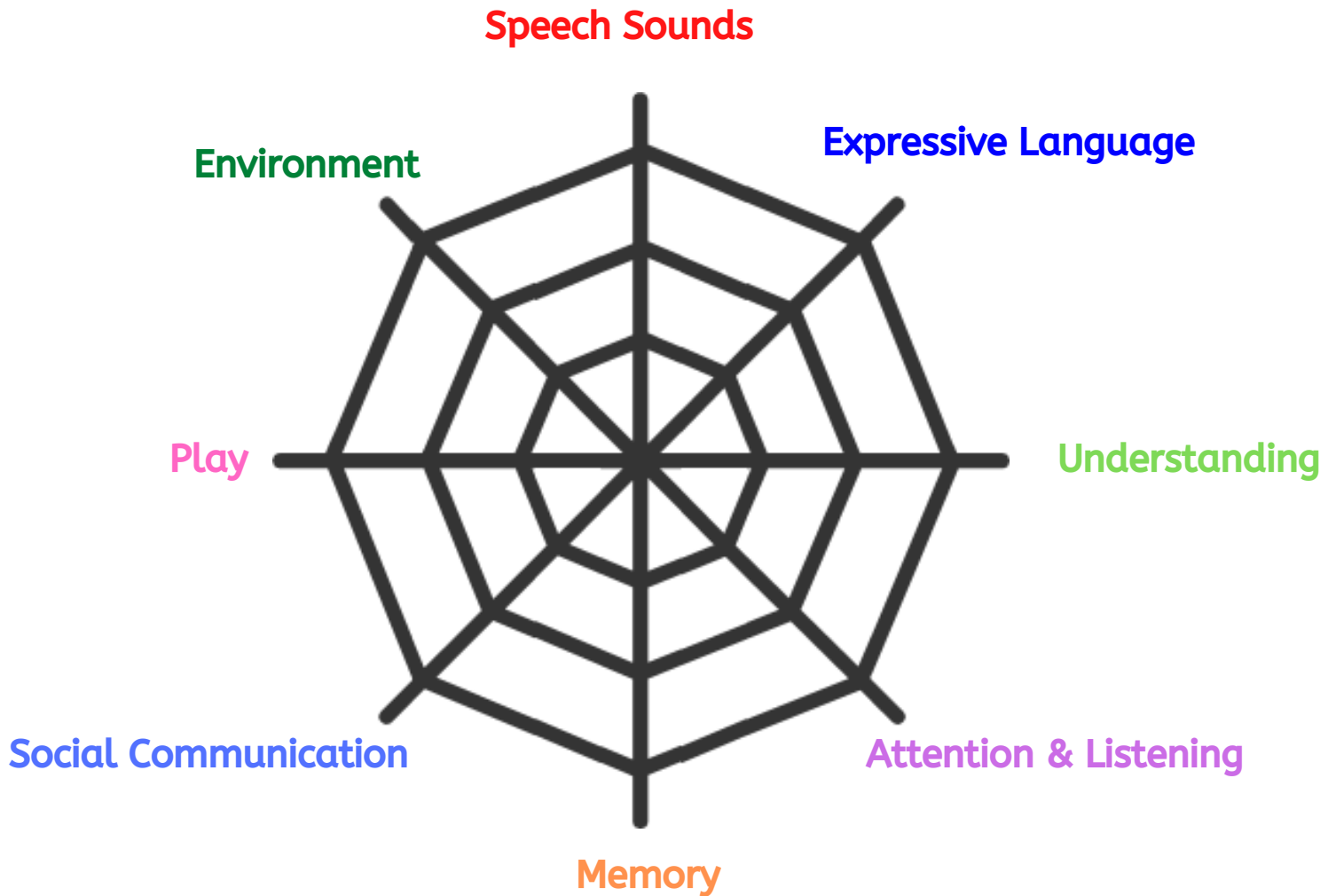
Understanding	Listening & Hearing	Talking Speech sounds Words Sentences
Non Verbal Skills Facial expressions Eye contact	ALL of these are very important. Without one, communication will be significantly less effective	Memory Auditory Visual
Social Skills Turn taking Staying on topic	Physical Ability Gesture/signs Body language	Motivation Interaction

Language is made up of a number of components.

These elements work together so that we can understand and produce language.

The components are interdependent – each bit needs to work in order for the whole system to function effectively.





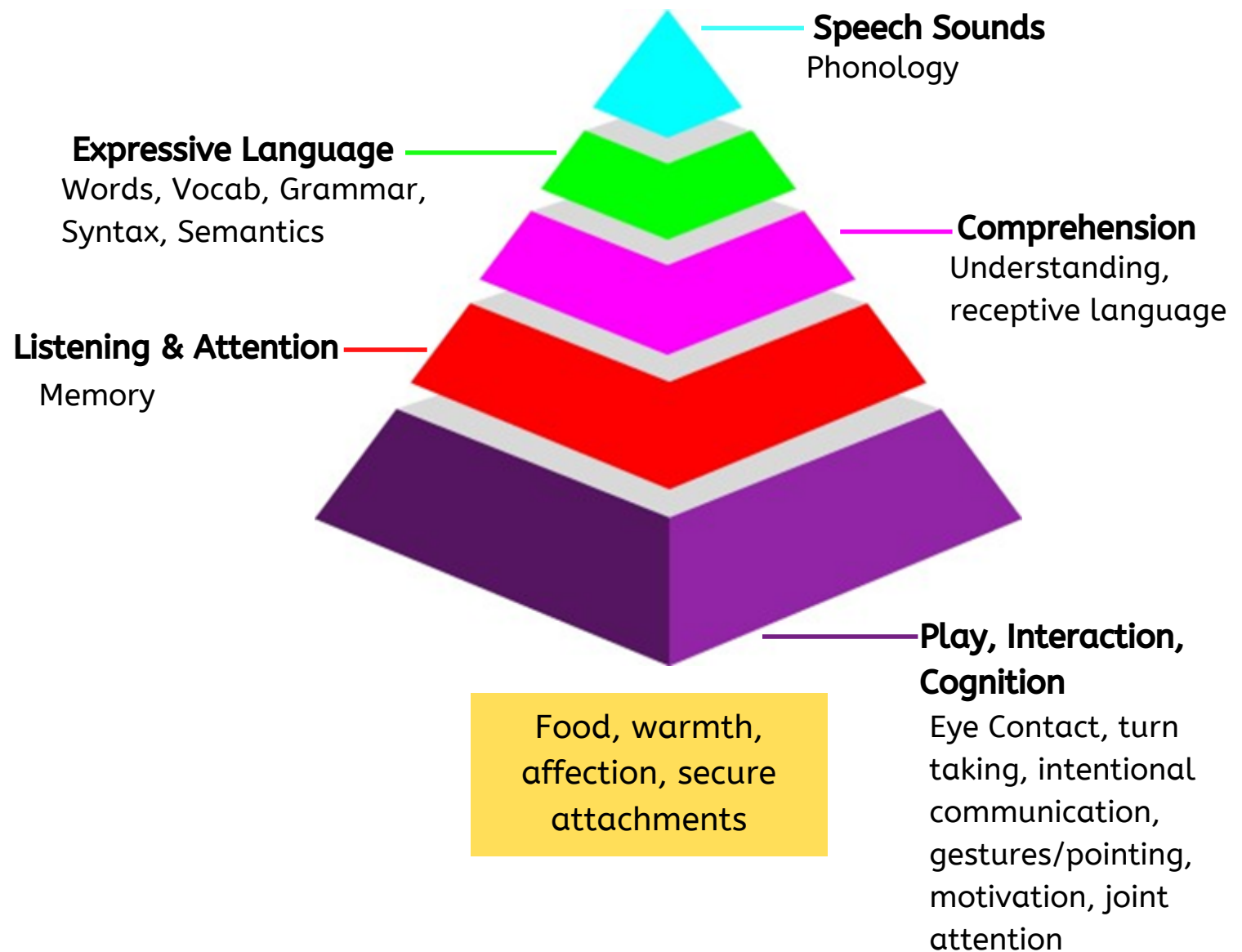
Imagine a spiders web. If one strand of the web is broken it can impact on the structure of the web and can affect the stability of the other strands.

A child needs the following in order to develop their communication skills

- Motivation to interact or communicate
- Hear input
- Control over muscles
- Listen and attend
- Take turns
- Apparatus for receiving (ears) and producing (mouth, tongue, vocal cords).
- Understand words have meaning and sounds have meaning
- Discriminate between sounds
- Understand rules and structure of spoken language
- Pre verbal skills e.g. cause and effect

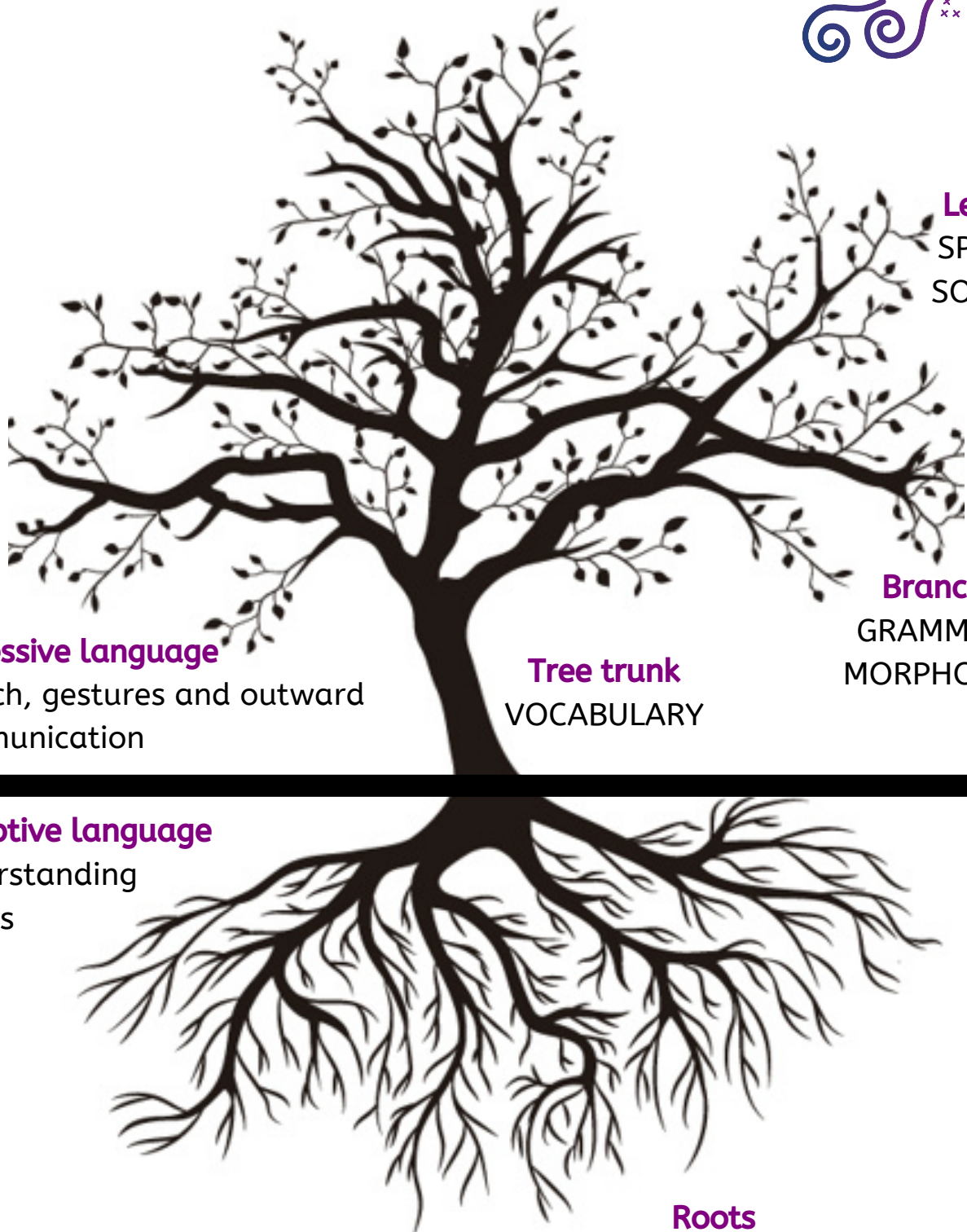


Communication Pyramid



This visual representation is useful to think of language development as building blocks. If a child is experiencing difficulties higher up the pyramid then we need to look at what comes underneath in order to support the child.

EIF Report 'Language as a child wellbeing indicator'



Expressive language

Speech, gestures and outward communication

Tree trunk

VOCABULARY

Leaves

SPEECH
SOUNDS

Branches

GRAMMAR &
MORPHOLOGY

Receptive language

Understanding
others

Roots

COMPREHENSION

What is SLCD

SLCD is a term used to refer to all children who have a difficulty communicating.

It can be defined as a group of children whose speech and language development is different from what you would expect for children of the same chronological age.

It encompasses speech and language delay, as well as more severe forms of speech and language disorder.

Delay/Difficulty vs Disorder

When a child's development is delayed they are following normal developmental patterns only later than expected. They may appear to catch up themselves without intervention. We might say they have a **language difficulty**

When a child's development is disordered they do not follow patterns of normal development. These children always need intervention.

If one area of communication development is more significantly behind than another, this may also be classed as a disorder.

MEDICAL MODEL

Looks for the physiological cause of SLCD

Attempts to use clearly defined categories to explain SLCD and discover a cause

Causes could be ...

- Physical problems
- Hearing loss
- Cognitive difficulties
- Emotional/ behavioural disorders
- Environmental deprivation

Benefits:

- Straightforward where problems have a cause and a well defined set of symptoms
- Can predict the nature of the SLCD

Problems:

- Quite often SLCD have no identifiable cause (e.g. DLD, then other systems better)
- Label orientated

It is recognised that where children have other difficulties such as ASC and Down's Syndrome, the SLCD are secondary to the main difficulty

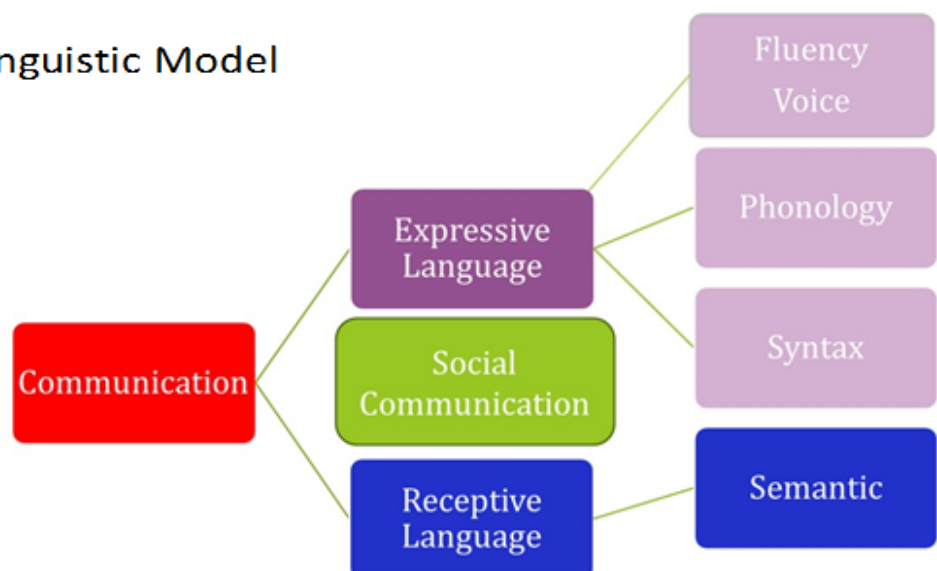
LINGUISTIC MODEL

Knowing the cause of a difficulty can be helpful, but as language is a complex system, it can be more helpful to know what aspect is affected

The linguistic model breaks language down into its component parts; and looks at the particular bits of language behaviour that are causing issues. This enables us to pin point exactly where a child's difficulties lie.

- Receptive: can't understand verbal communication
- Expressive: affects spoken output of a child
- Phonological: difficulties discriminating and producing appropriate sounds
- Articulation: difficulties making the right sounds, physical or coordination
- Semantic: understanding and using right meanings for words, word storage
- Syntactic: using words in appropriate grammatical sequences
- Pragmatic: child's understanding and use of social aspects of language

Language models: Linguistic Model



PSYCHO LINGUISTIC MODEL

Combines elements of previous 2 models (i.e. medical model and linguistic model). Knowing the cause of a problem can be interesting – but not always helpful in meeting the child's needs.

This model identifies exactly where the breakdown occurs, in order to plan how to help the child specifically, and looks at the underlying processing that takes place for a child to use and understand language.

In summary it asks:

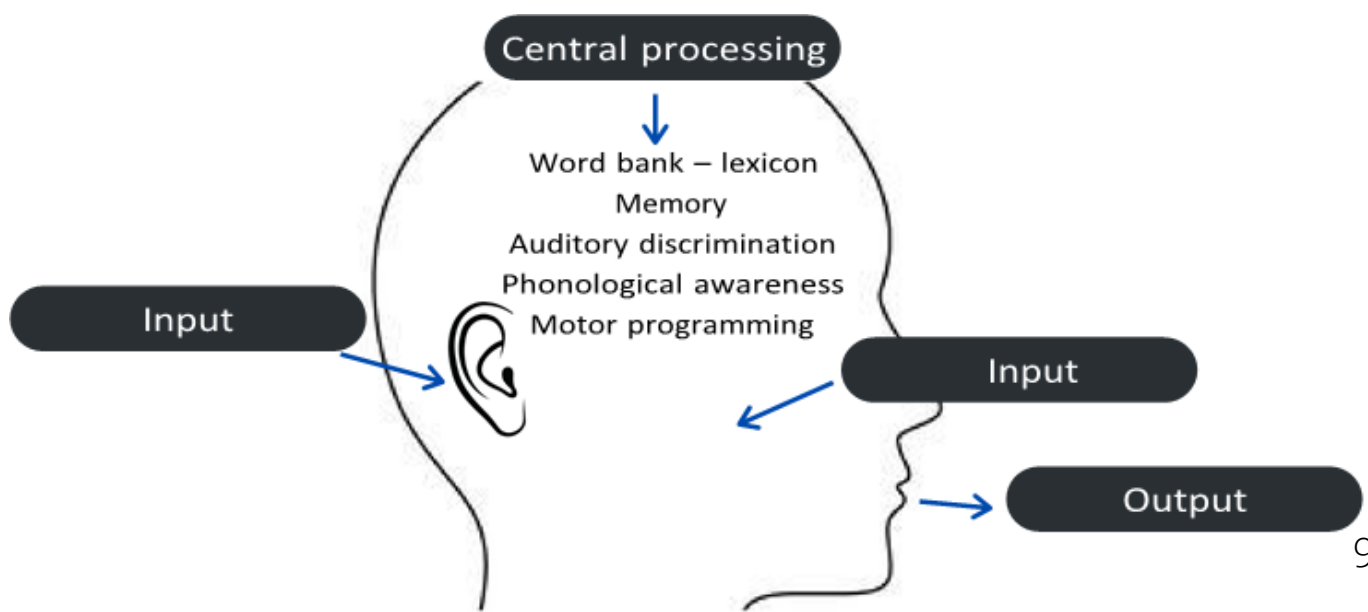
OUTPUT - Does the child have difficulties speaking clearly?

- Can they put words together in the right order?
- Do they use the right word when they refer to an object or event?

INPUT - Does the child have problems understanding what has been said?

- Does the child have problems remembering what they have been told?

Simply the SLCD (speech, language and communication difficulty) may be an INPUT/OUTPUT or storage/retrieval issue with the lexical representations.



Communication breakdown

There are various reasons why there may be a communication breakdown. For example

It's a complex process

It's pretty tricky

It can go wrong at any point

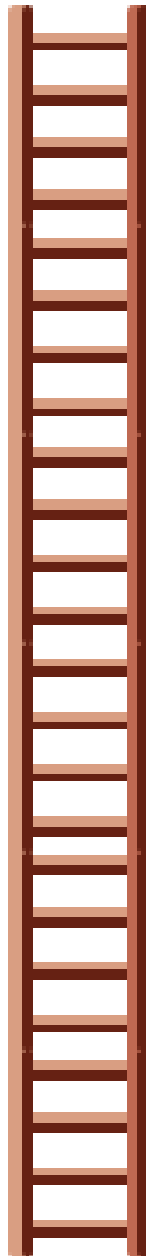
Affected by environment

Affected by biology

24 steps to communication

INPUT

- 1.Experience situations
- 2.Experience communication:
self and with others
- 3.Be aware of other people
- 4.Be motivated to communicate
- 5.Attend to other people –
visual memory
- 6.Hear
- 7.Listen
- 8.Auditory memory
- 9.Understand – words,
situations
- 10.Have ideas and thoughts,
apply reasoning
- 11.Put thoughts into words:
organise and reason a
response
- 12.Develop and organise word
bank
- 13.Access word bank



OUTPUT

- 14.Sequence words correctly
- 15.Apply grammatical rules
- 16.Choose correct sounds for
words
- 17.Sequence sounds correctly
- 18.Send messages to muscles
involved in speech
- 19.Muscles in good working
order
- 20.Co-ordinate and sequence
movements at correct speed
- 21.Intact vocal tract structure
- 22.Add fluency, resonance,
intonation, breath control
- 23.Apply appropriate body
language and facial
expression
- 24Someone to communicate
with and listen to you-
feedback, reinforcement,
turn taking

Types of communication difficulty - Expressive

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Syntax - Grammar	- Limited vocab for expected age/stage of development - Immature grammar - Grammatical rules not followed (e.g. incorrect word order)	- Big Book of Ideas (WellComm) - EYFS Packs - Language and Listening - Target word - Narrative Therapy - Colourful Semantics 'Rainbow sentences'
Semantics - Words	- Delayed/limited vocab - Difficulties learning new words - Difficulties with word finding - Not able to tell stories/ sequence	- Big Book of Ideas (WellComm) - EYFS Packs - Language and Listening - Narrative Therapy - Category Sorting Pre learning - topical vocabulary Cues
Dysfluency - stammering/ stuttering	Repetition of words/ sounds in a sentence	REFER - Give time - Don't interrupt - Reduce demands on speech - Use a good model - slow and clear
Dysphonia Voice disorder	Hoarse voice/ no voice	- Good voice care - Reduce vocal abuse (e.g. shouting)

Types of communication difficulty - Expressive

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Prosody	• Speak too loudly, or in monotone, or may not pick up the subtle changes in meaning that are signalled by changes in pitch/ intonation in others' speech	• Good models • Social stories
Elective / selective Mutism	• Child does not talk in different settings, but may talk in others eg: talks at home but not in nursery	• Consider referral for specialist advice from SLT • Play non-verbal games that do not 'demand' speech



Types of communication difficulty - Receptive

What is it?

How to spot it

What to do

Understanding
Comprehension

- Appears not to hear what is said
- Looks blank when spoken to
- Repeats back part or all of what has just been said (echolalia)
- Watches adults and others carefully to see what they need to do
- May get in trouble frequently for not doing as asked
- Poor attention to verbal instructions, questions or comments
- Not able to follow simple instructions/questions

- Big Book of Ideas (WellComm)
- EYFS Packs 'Foundations for Understanding')
- Visual supports
- Get attention first
- Pre learn vocabulary
- Environmental adaptations
- Chunk language
- Reduce rate
- Auditory memory and listening activities
- Lola the Listening Leopard - supports underlying listening skills to help with understanding
- TALK Understanding workshop



Summary of Language Development

Summary of Language Development

0-1 years

- using babble and SINGLE WORDS
- understanding situations and simple instructions

2 years

- putting 2 WORDS together
- understanding 2 key words in a sentence

3 years

- putting 3 WORDS together
- understanding 3 key words and CONCEPTS

4 years

- putting 4 OR MORE WORDS together
- can use grammatical structures, it's all there now!
- understanding complex sentences

Types of communication difficulty - Speech

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Phonology	Difficulties with speech processing knowing which sounds go where	- Develop listening, discrimination and attention skills using Letters and Sounds approaches for all speech sound difficulties - EYFS pack - speech sound development pack - Mr Tongue can support oral awareness and can be used in the early years to help children increase awareness of their mouth, lips, tongue and palate and how they work - Lola the Listening Leopard - supports underlying listening skills to help speech - Meta linguistic awareness e.g. syllable clapping - TALK Speech Sounds Workshop - Auditory discrimination activities
Fronting	Normal pattern until 3-3;6, Children say: 'tar' - car, 'tow' - cow	

Types of communication difficulty - Speech

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Backing	- Disordered pattern - Children say: 'gaggy'-daddy	- Develop listening, discrimination and attention skills using Letters and Sounds approaches for all speech sound difficulties - EYFS pack - speech sound development pack - Mr Tongue can support oral awareness and can be used in the early years to help children increase awareness of their mouth, lips, tongue and palate and how they work - Lola the Listening Leopard - supports underlying listening skills to help speech - Meta linguistic awareness e.g. syllable clapping - TALK Speech Sounds Workshop - Auditory discrimination activities - Single word production - Minimal pairs - TALK Speech Sounds Workshop - Conversational speech
Stopping	- Normal pattern until 3 years - Children say: 'dee'-sea, 'beet'-feet	
Prosody	- Normal pattern until 4;6 - Children say: 'boon'-spoon, 'dar'-star, 'plate'-pate	
Initial consonant deletion	- This is a disordered pattern of development - Miss first sound off words: food - 'ood' Car - 'ar'	
Gliding	- Normal pattern until 6yrs - Children say 'wing - ring' 'jots - lots'	
Lisp - dental /s/	- Normal pattern until around 6 years 'ss' becomes 'th' - May not resolve until adult teeth arrive	

Types of communication difficulty - Speech

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Articulation	Difficulties with production of speech sounds	- TALK Speech Sounds Workshop - Develop listening, discrimination and attention skills using Letters and Sounds approaches for all speech sound difficulties - EYFS pack - speech sound development pack - Mr Tongue can support oral awareness and can be used in the early years to help children increase awareness of their mouth, lips, tongue and palate and how they work - Lola the Listening Leopard - supports underlying listening skills to help speech
Dyspraxia	- Difficulties sequencing and co-ordinating sounds and/or oral to make words. - Child might 'grope' for sounds, may have had feeding difficulties as an infant	
Dysarthria	- Slurry speech due to muscle weakness. - Often associated with conditions involving muscle weakness ie: Cerebral Palsy. - Child might dribble and have little oral control	

Rough guide to speech sounds

First come the easy sounds (0-2yrs)	m n w p b t d
Then the harder ones (2-3yrs)	k g f v s z
Then the much harder ones (3-4yrs)	sh ch j
Then two or three sounds together (4yrs)	sp st pl dr thr
Some sounds take ages, this is normal (6yrs)	l r th

Types of communication difficulty - Pragmatic

What is it?

Social
Communication
Disorder/Difficulty

Interaction
– following social rules of
language

How to spot it

- May have some fluent well formed sentences but may have difficulties with: Interpreting social rules (i.e. answering questions appropriately, turn taking in conversations, understanding the rules of pretend play, abstract concepts especially of space and time, keeping to topic, literal understanding (i.e. pull your socks up.)
- Making and forming friendships
- Pragmatic skills should develop in the early weeks of life, turn taking babble conversations, initiate conversations by making sounds.

What to do

- EYFS Pack: Foundations for Understanding
- EYFS Pack: First Steps to Communication (for pre verbal children)
- Time to Talk. Ginger Bear – for verbal children that need support with language rules
- Visual supports
- TALK Social Communication in the Early Years Workshop

ASC/ASD
Autistic Spectrum
condition/Disorder

- In own world: watches activities from outside, no attempt to join in.
- Difficulties with play: Lining up toys
- Lack of pretend play
- Difficulties tolerating change in routine and environment
- Not always interested in communicating, unless on own terms.
- May be echolalic
- Eye contact may be very difficult

- Visual supports
- EYFS Pack: First Steps to Communication (for pre verbal children)
- AAC, PECS, LAMP
- Social stories
- Making choices
- Creating communication opportunities
- TALK Social Communication workshop

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

What is Developmental Language Disorder?

- A label developed in 2016 to describe significant, persistent language difficulties in children.
- DLD replaces the term 'Specific Language Impairment' (SLI) and several other terms which have been and sometimes still are used as alternatives.
- DLD is a difficulty with language that is not secondary to any other difficulty.
- DLD is a disordered profile of learning language.
- It is 'developmental'. It is not as a result of other neurodevelopmental or biomedical disorders; this would be labelled 'Language Disorder associated with...'
- DLD can co-occur with other disorders.
- DLD is life-long.
- DLD is prevalent in 7-10% of the population (approximately 2-3 in every class of 30).
- DLD consists of difficulties understanding and/or using vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.



Types of communication difficulty - DLD (Developmental Language Disorder)

What is it?	How to spot it	What to do
Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)	Significant difficulties learning and using language, which is significantly affecting their learning or communication in everyday life May have difficulties with some or all: • attention, listening and concentration • auditory memory • phonological • awareness and literacy skills • social interaction and communication • emotional regulation, planning and sequencing • expressing self and speaking clearly	• Big Book of Ideas (WelComm) • EYFS packs: Language and Listening, Foundations for Understanding, Speech Sound Development Pack • Promote word awareness throughout the day • Everyday EY routines and activities where possible • Model and recast adult grammar and sentence structure • 'Chunk' and repeat instructions as necessary • Group children with language difficulties with peers who can model language • Provide sentence frames and prompts for verbal activities • Integrate specialist intervention and targets with class work • Specific programmes • TALK Adult-Child Interaction Workshop



Two therapy approaches

LANGUAGE

- Narrative - story telling
- Nursery and Reception, and KS 1 and 2 Narrative Packs
- Colour coded
- Visual reinforcement integral to programme
- Curriculum based topics
- Based on question words

WHO

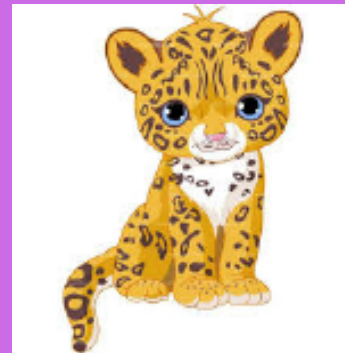
WHERE

WHEN

WHAT

LISTENING

- Lola the Listening Leopard
- Try to sit still
- Try to be quiet
- Look at the person talking
- Remember what has been said



Impact of SLCD

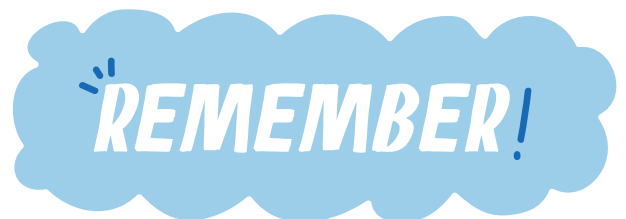
EXTERNAL

- Acting out
- Frustration
- Becoming withdrawn
- Learned helplessness
- Class clown
- Difficulties with learning
- Poor educational achievement
- Youth offending
- Limited friendships or unhealthy relationships
- Vulnerable to grooming

INTERNAL

- Poor emotional health and wellbeing
- Depression
- Poor self image
- Prone to being misled
- Angry at self

- Some SLCN are **PREVENTABLE**
- Some are **TRANSIENT**
- Most are **TREATABLE**
- Many children make **GOOD PROGRESS** with the right support at the right time from the right people
- People can learn how to support SLCD really well
- We have the Wellcomm screening tool



SLCD	Speech Language and Communication Difficulty
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
SCD	Social Communication Disorder/ Difficulty
DLD	Developmental Language Disorder