

Speech, Language and Communication Needs



WHAT ARE SLCN?

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) can occur as a result of hearing loss, general developmental needs or as part of a disability or medical syndrome, such as Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy or Autistic Spectrum Condition. Difficulties with talking can also present without an obvious cause.

They are persistent difficulties that require support and are not just a child who is a 'late talker.'

Speech difficulties include:

- Difficulty in the receptive language (the ability to understand information)
- Delay in language acquisition
- Difficulty in expressive language (not being able to put thoughts into words and sentences)
- Difficulty with telling the difference between sounds
- Difficulty with the articulation (making) of sounds
- Difficulty with combining sounds in words
- Difficulty saying longer words
- Difficulty with the flow of talking (stammering or stuttering)

WHAT STRATEGIES MIGHT HELP?

- Give child time to process language and respond.
- Ensure face-to-face and direct eye contact.
- Develop language through drama and role-play.
- Use simple and familiar language and short concise sentences.
- Check understanding: ask child to repeat back instructions.
- Reinforce speech with facial expression, gesture and sign.
- Teach reading and use the printed word to reinforce language.
- Reinforce new language and spoken instructions with print, pictures, diagrams, symbols, and concrete materials.
- Emphasize key words, reinforcing visually.
- Teach grammar through print: flash cards, games, pictures of prepositions, symbols, etc.
- Avoid closed questions and encourage the child to speak in more than one-word utterances.
- Encourage pupil to speak aloud in class by providing visual prompts. Allowing the pupil to read information may be easier for them than speaking spontaneously.
- The use of a Home-School Diary can help pupils in telling their "news".
- Encourage the child to lead.
- Set up regular and additional opportunities to speak to others, e.g. taking messages etc.
- Provide lots of short listening activities/games and visual and tactile materials to reinforce oral work and strengthen auditory skills.
- Practise speech sounds and reinforce all speech sound work visually: pictures, symbol & signs e.g. Jolly Phonics

Things to consider:

- **Good communication is the gateway to learning, friendships, academic achievement and success at work**
- Use the SALT Checklist to help decide whether a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy Service may be appropriate.
- Don't be tempted to finish a sentence off for a child. This will result in less practice for them to improve the clarity of their speech.
- If a child is unable to answer an open question, provide them with options to choose.
- Teach vocabulary: meaning, function of word, number of syllables, rhyming words, initial sound etc.
- Make sure that you give plenty of opportunity to develop listening and attention skills

TOP TIPS:

- Make sure that the child has had their hearing checked
- Model correct speech back to them
- Allow time for processing