


What's in a Name? Developmental Language Disorder and More

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Session Objectives

- ▣ Define Developmental Language Disorder
- ▣ Describe the benefits and concerns of adopting the term Developmental Language Disorder
- ▣ Explain why the numerous array of terms for pediatric language disorders impacts awareness, diagnosis, and advocacy.

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Defining Language Disorder


- ▣ How do you define language disorder?
- ▣ How do you know when a child exhibits a language disorder?



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Defining Language Disorder

Your ideas?



Defining Language Disorder

- ▣ What is in the literature?



ASHA's Definition of Language Disorder

- A language disorder is a problem with understanding and/or using spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems (e.g., gestures, sign language). The disorder may involve 1) the form of language (phonology, morphology, syntax), 2) the content of language (semantics), 3) and/or the function of language in communication (pragmatics) in any combination.



ASHA: Additional information

- <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/Preschool-Language-Disorders/>
- <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Spoken-Language-Disorders/>
- <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Written-Language-Disorders/>
- <https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Late-Language-Emergence/>

Other Definitions

- Fey (1986) Language impairment: A significant deficit in the child's development of content, form, or use of language
- Lahey (1988) Language disorder is any disruption in learning or use of one's native language as evidenced by language behaviors that are different from but not superior to those expected given a child's chronological age.

And more...

- Owens (2014—Disorders text, Page 3): Language disorder—which I will call language impairment applies to a heterogeneous group of developmental disorders, acquired disorders, delays or any combination of these principally characterized by deficits and/or immaturities in the use of spoken and/or written language for comprehension and/or production purposes that may involve the form, content, or function of language in any combination.
- Language impairment may persist across the lifetime and vary in symptoms, manifestations, effects and severity over time.

Georgia Department of Education

- <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Speech-Language-Impairment.aspx>

ASHA Practice Portal: Spoken Language Disorder

- A spoken language disorder (SLD), also known as an oral language disorder, represents a significant impairment in the acquisition and use of language across modalities (e.g., speech, sign language, or both) due to deficits in comprehension and/or production across any of the five language domains (i.e., phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics). Language disorders may persist across the lifespan, and symptoms may change over time.
- When SLD is a primary disability—not accompanied by an intellectual disability, global developmental delay, hearing or other sensory impairment, motor dysfunction, or other mental disorder or medical condition—it is considered a specific language impairment (SLI).
- An SLD may also occur in the presence of other conditions, such as
 - autism spectrum disorder (ASD),
 - intellectual disabilities (ID),
 - developmental disabilities (DD),
 - attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),
 - traumatic brain injury (TBI),
 - psychological/emotional disorders,
 - hearing loss.

Have you heard the term....

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)?



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Developmental Language Disorder

- Paul, Norbury, & Gosse (2018)

Developmental language disorder includes children for whom:

1. language impairments are the most salient presenting problem with no (yet) known biological cause; not other diagnostic label is appropriate
2. in school-age children, with primary DLD that coexist with literacy disorders (often called language-learning disorders)

Also another group of children with language disorders are associated with or secondary to some other developmental disorder

And more...

- Nelson (2010; text on Language and Literacy Disorders): Language impairment and developmental language disorder are used to signal a primary diagnosis that involves language. This diagnosis is used in contrast to a language disorder secondary to comorbid disabilities.
- Language impairment is diagnosed when expectations for typical development of language are not met and children are delayed in achieving developmental milestones by a significant degree.

Developmental Language Disorder

- McGregor, K. (2020). How We Fail Children with Developmental Language Disorder. LSHSS, Vol 51, 981-992. (October 2020) **Editor's Award**
- "Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a neuro-developmental condition that emerges early in childhood and frequently persists into adulthood. People with DLD have significant difficulty learning, understanding and using spoken language." (page 981)

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ASHA Leader Article: Diverging Views on Language Disorders

- Included in the LD umbrella are two subgroups:
 - Children who have a biomedical condition that may affect their language development, such as Down syndrome, intellectual disability or sensorineural hearing loss. For these children, the panel recommends a diagnosis of **language disorder associated with X** (where X is the biomedical condition).
 - Children with **"developmental language disorder"** (DLD), in which language difficulties are not associated with a known biomedical condition, such as brain injury, cerebral palsy, sensorineural hearing loss, ASD or intellectual disability. DLD can co-occur with impairments in the areas of attention, motor coordination, literacy, speech, behavior or emotional problems, executive function, or auditory processing. A DLD diagnosis does not require a mismatch between verbal and nonverbal ability. Children with low nonverbal IQ scores who do not meet criteria for intellectual disability (generally with scores between 70 and 85) can be diagnosed with DLD.

- Reference: Diverging Views on Language Disorder (2018). The ASHA Leader. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.F1R1.23122018.44>

Is DLD the new SLI?



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Specific Language Impairment (SLI)

- Used to define children with isolated impairment of language with all other skills judged as normal. Based on the following exclusionary criteria:
- Significant impairment of language skills that is not:
 - -the result of a hearing loss
 - -due to a cognitive deficit
 - -due to the child's environment (deprivation)
 - -an emotional problem (e.g., selective mutism)
- The etiology (cause) is unknown but assumed to be neurological. All other aspects of development are within normal limits.
- Term used mostly for research purposes---not as common in clinical practice; not a term used by insurance companies; eligibility for school services.

A LOT of controversy regarding the best label---sample of terms

- ASHA---Language Disorder
- ASHA---Spoken Language Disorder and Written Language Disorder
- DSM-5---Language Disorder DSM-5 315.39
- ICD-10 Code---Mixed Receptive-Expressive Language Disorder (F80.2)
- ICD-10 Code---Expressive Language Disorder (F80.1)
- Specific Language Impairment
- Language Impairment
- Primary Language Impairment (Disorder)
- Language Delay
- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)---UK/International: starting to be used more in US (especially in research)

□ Also see: Leonard, L. (2020). A 200-year history of the Study of Childhood Language Disorders of Unknown Origin: Changes in Terminology. Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups, Vol 5, 6011.

And---then there is the issue of what each label means

- Are some of the terms synonymous?
- Is there a difference between Language Disorder and Language Impairment?
- Is a Language Delay different than a Language Disorder? (tricky question)
- Does Developmental Language Disorder imply that a child will "outgrow?"

Developmental Language Disorder---UK consensus

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ1dHS1X8ig>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ-s02HWLb0>
- DLD is a type of language disorder (language disorder is an umbrella term)



DLDandme.org

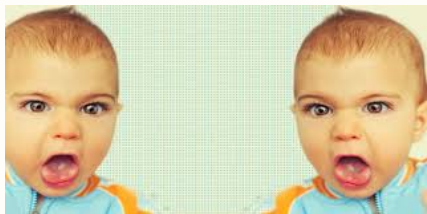


ASHA Podcast on DLD

- <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/do/10.1044/2021-0930-podcast-dld-research-award/full/>

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Why does a definition of language disorder matter?



What might happen if definitions used by SLPs differ?

Issues to Consider?

- ❑ Are children with DLD underdiagnosed?
- ❑ Does the average person know what a language disorder is?
- ❑ What terms do parents typically use?
- ❑ What if language difficulties are secondary to another disorder? Services?
- ❑ What impact does differences in terminology across service settings?

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Advocacy and Awareness

- ❑ How can we raise awareness of language disorders in children?
- ❑ What ideas do you have for advocacy?
- ❑ How would a single term impact/unify awareness and advocacy?

2/6/2016

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Questions???



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Thank you!

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