



## What every teacher needs to know about speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

with a focus on Developmental  
Language Disorder (DLD)



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## Who are we?



Tom Pegler  
Director of Education



Amy Loxley  
Speech & Language Advisor



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## What does I CAN do?



[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

@ICANcharity 



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## What we will cover

- Relationship between speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and developmental language disorder (DLD)
- Identification
- Universal, targeted and specialist support, including
  - Whole school provision
  - Key targeted strategies
  - Referral to speech and language therapy



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## Agenda

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



# Speech, Language and Communication Needs & Developmental Language Disorder



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## Video: speech, language and communication needs



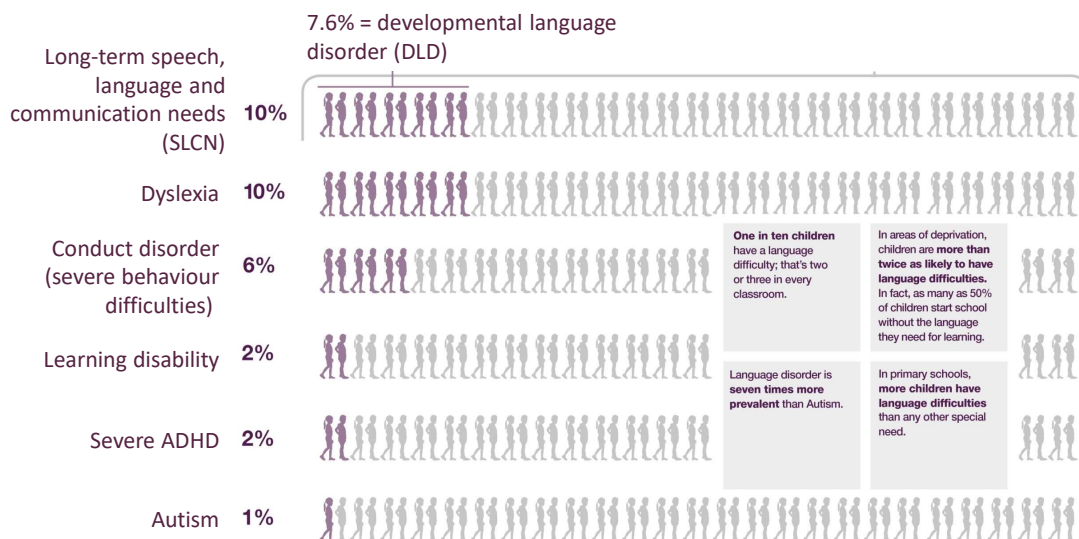
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG50fv-B3Uk>



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## The scale of the problem

Percentage of children in the UK with special educational needs or disabilities



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## How common is SLCN?

**One in ten** children are struggling to speak and understand language **right now**

That's 3 in every classroom!

More children have SLCN than any other special need

This increases to **one in four** for those children living in **disadvantaged** areas in the UK



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Without skills in speaking and understanding,  
children will struggle

To make friends

To learn

To have good  
mental health

To get a job



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Why does it matter?

93% of children with  
developmental language disorder  
have literacy difficulties

Young people with a  
language difficulty  
are four times less  
likely to get good  
GCSEs

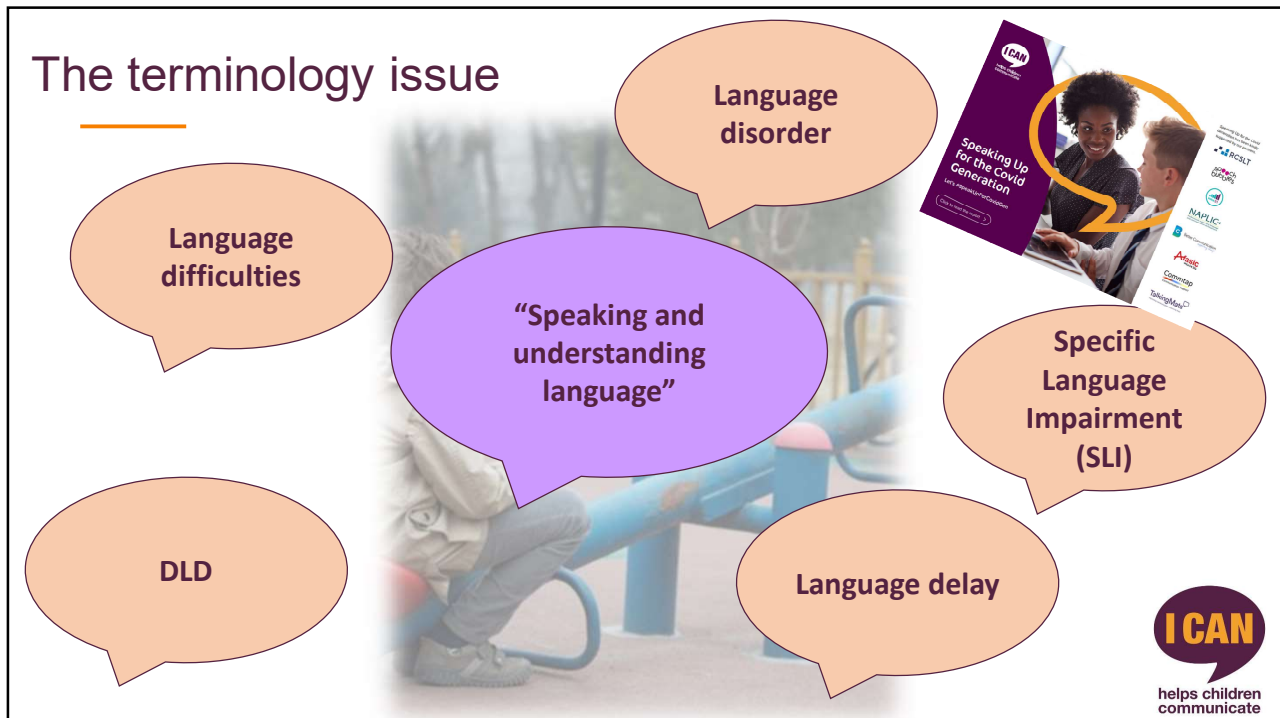
81% of children with  
emotional and  
behavioural disorders  
have significant  
language deficits,  
often unidentified

60% of young offenders  
have low language skills



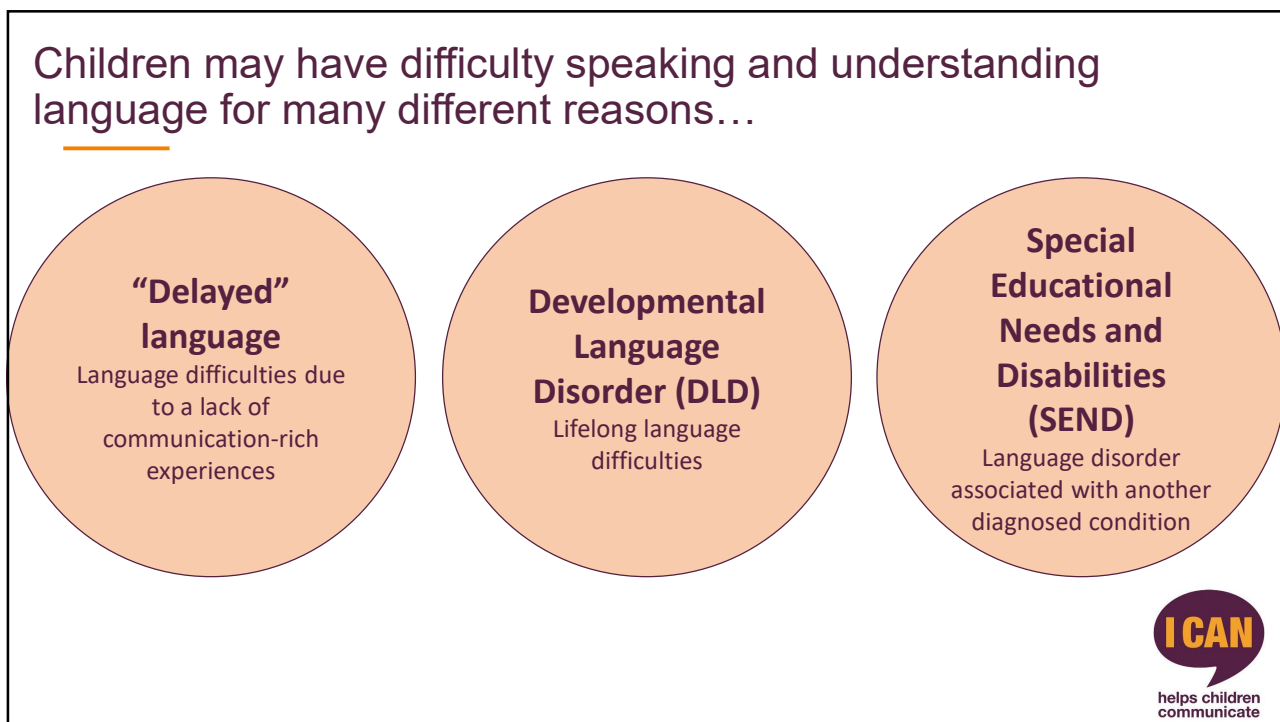
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## The terminology issue

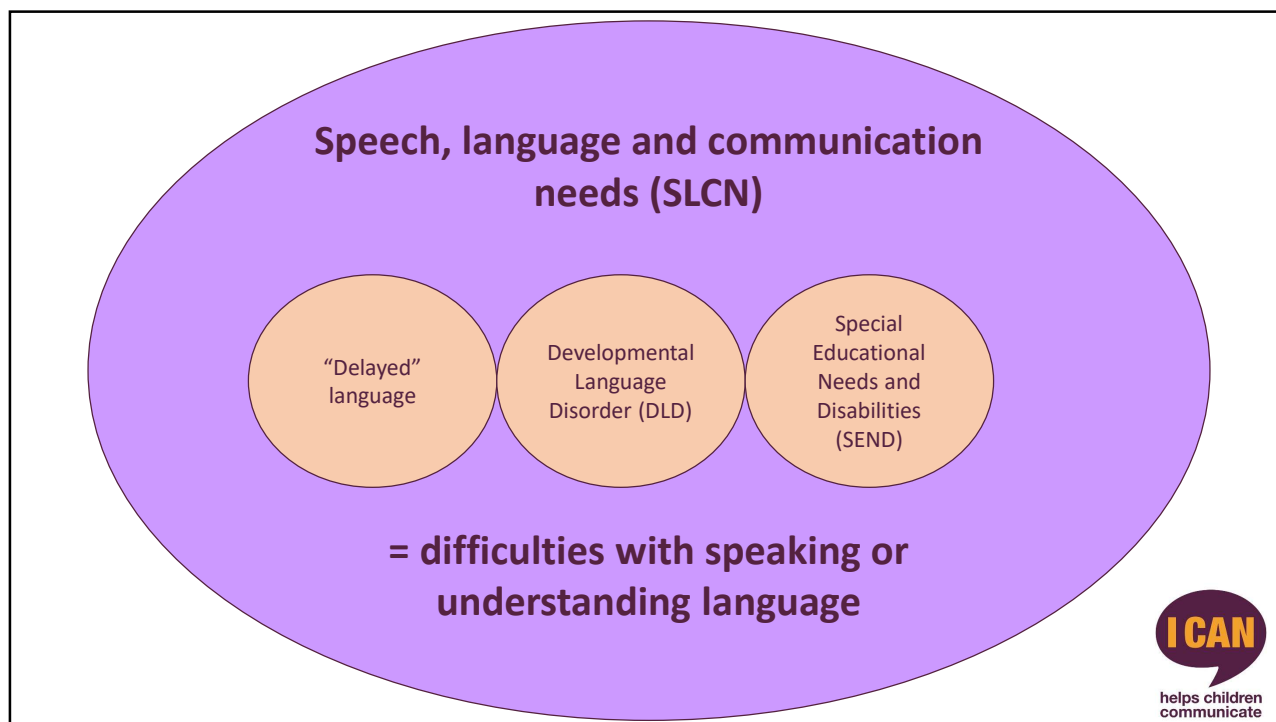


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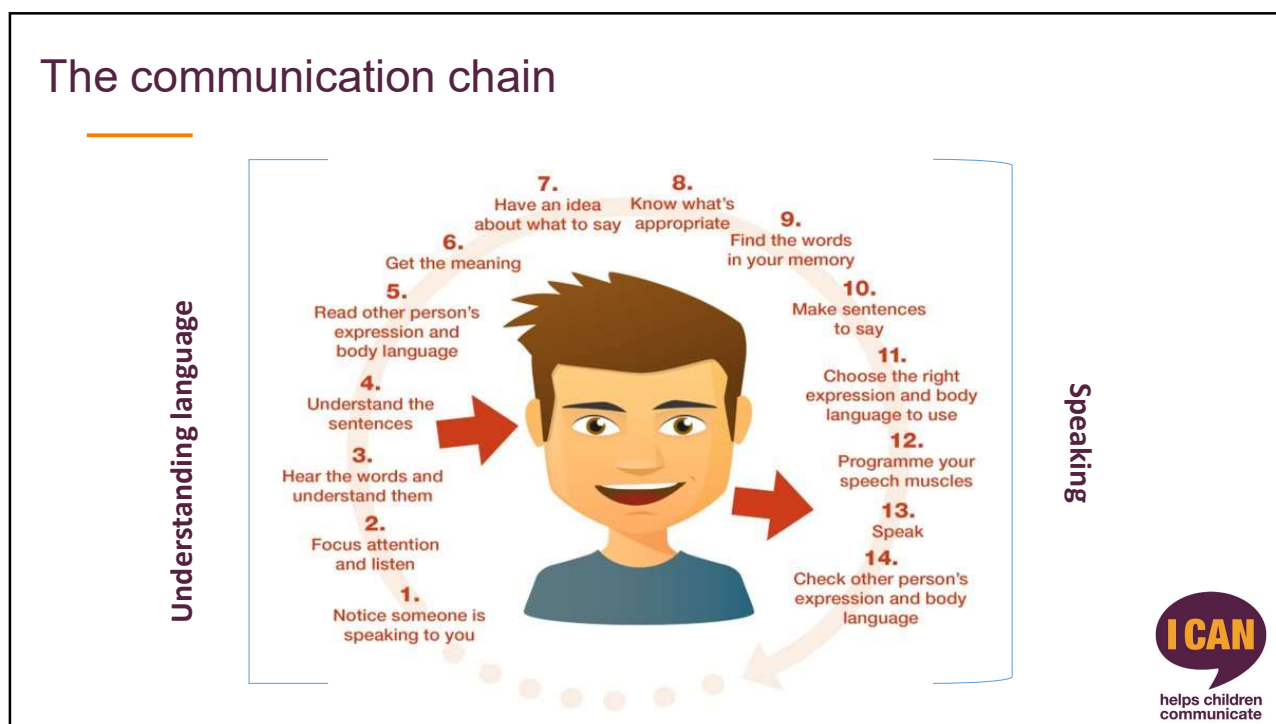
Children may have difficulty speaking and understanding language for many different reasons...



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### Identification:

What does it look like in the classroom?



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### What might it look like in the classroom?



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## What does it look like?

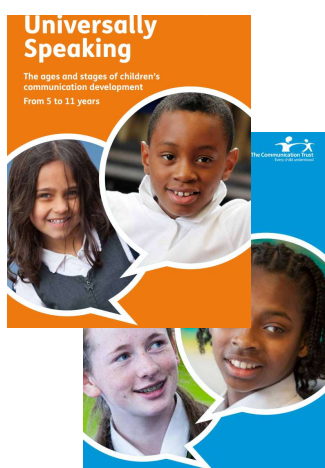


[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAsf\\_Wqjz4g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAsf_Wqjz4g)



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## How to identify



<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/universally-speaking/>



<https://ican.org.uk/shop/progression-tools-from-the-communication-trust-for-primary-years-set/>

<https://ican.org.uk/shop/progression-tools-from-the-communication-trust-for-secondary-years-set/>



<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>



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[illegible]

## Learning more than one language

## Speech, language or communication need

**SLCN affects BOTH / ALL languages**



## Agenda

- 1.
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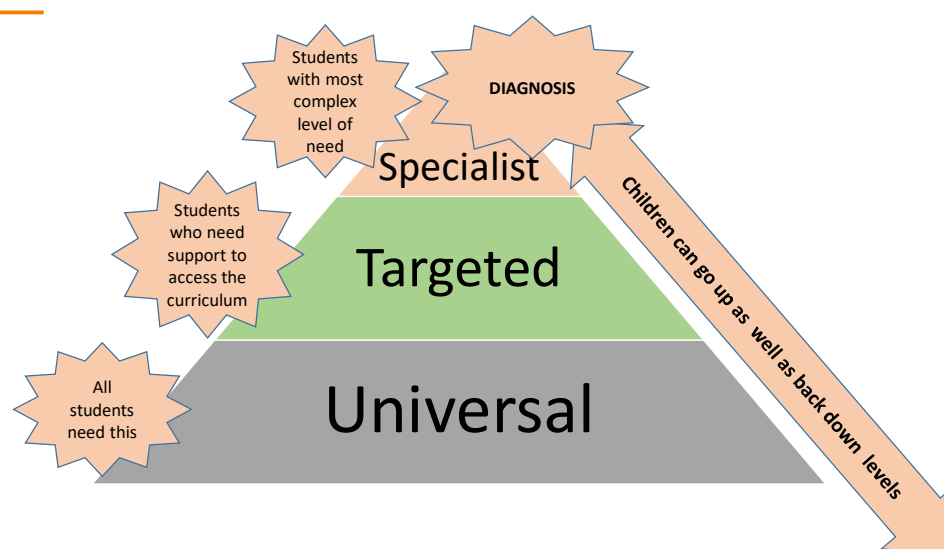


### Universal, targeted and specialist support



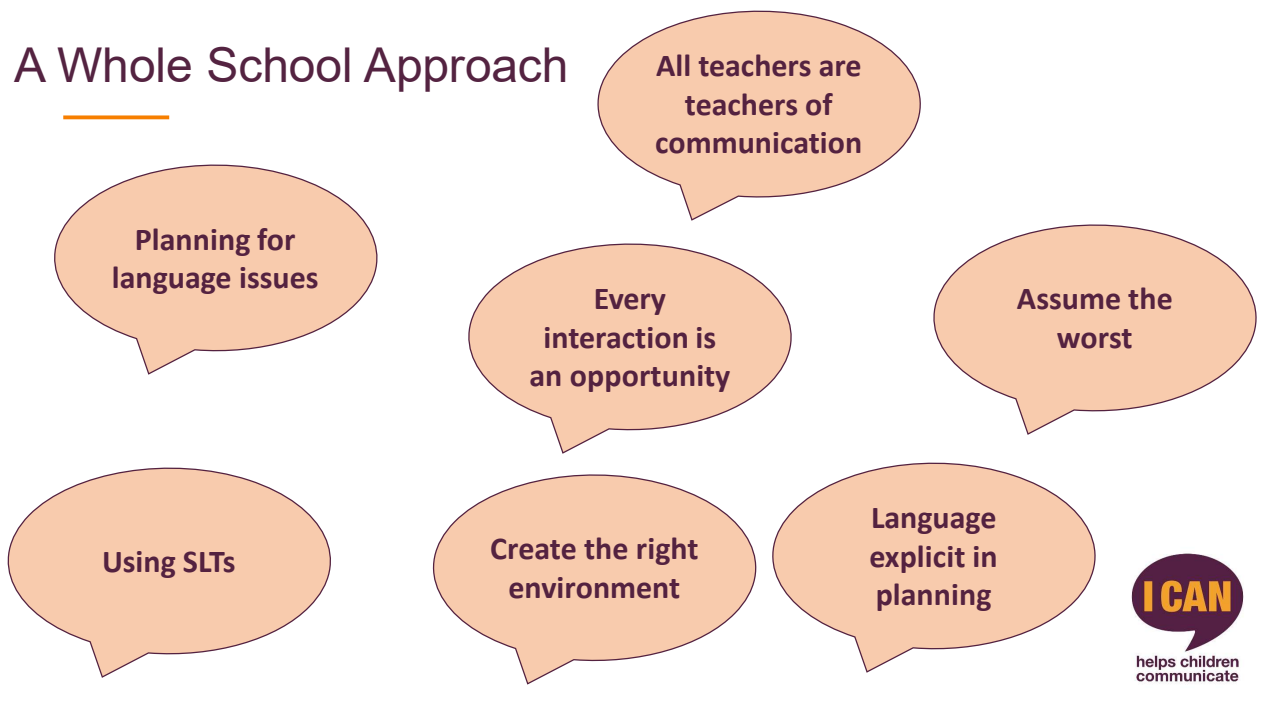
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### Universal, targeted and specialist support



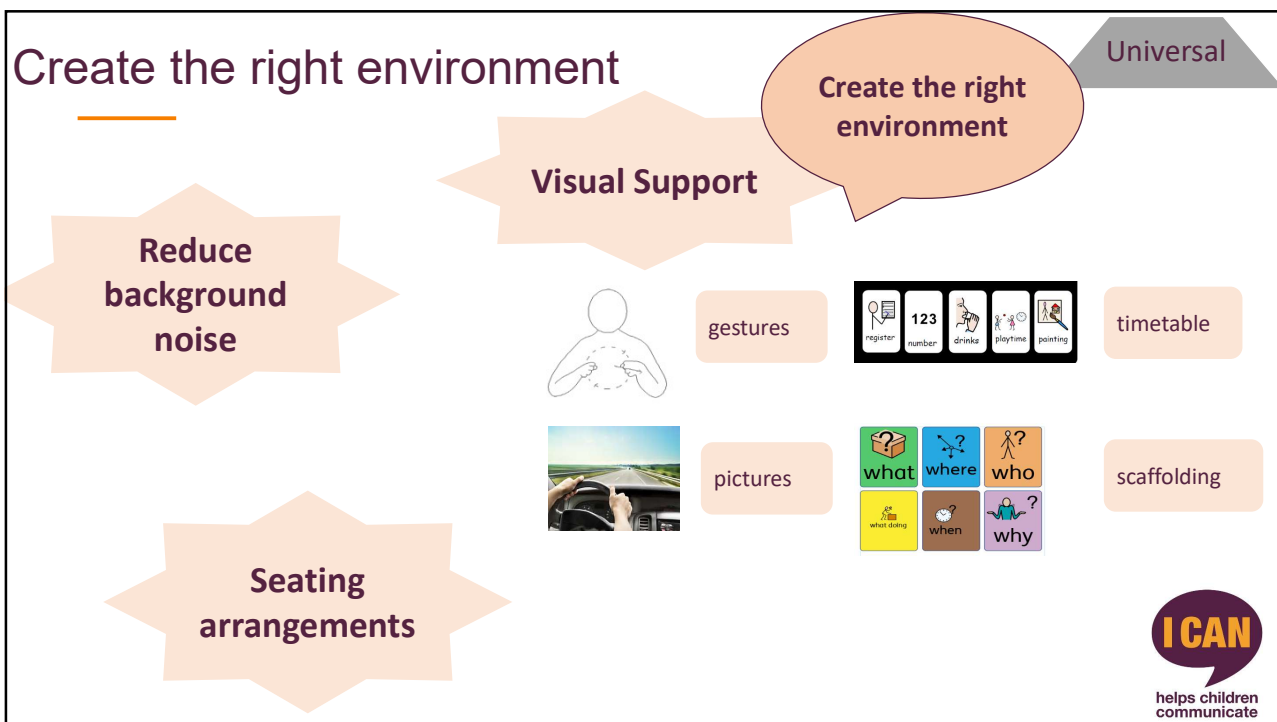
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## A Whole School Approach



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## Create the right environment



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## Create the right environment

Universal

Create the right environment

### Communication friendly environments – checklist

You can use this simple checklist to think about how your environment supports children's communication.

#### Elements to consider

- **Space, light and layout**
  - ☐ Is there good light, with a comfortable temperature and not too many visual distractions
- **Noise levels**
  - ☐ Are noise levels conducive to learning – what can be done to minimise unnecessary noise?
- **Use of visual support, this may include**
  - ☐ A colour coded map of school or setting, colour coded directions, photographs of staff members, photographs/ symbols used to support routines, eg washing hands, getting ready for PE
- **Routines**
  - ☐ Are children aware of rules and expectations? ☐ Do they know daily routines; could these be supported visually?
  - ☐ Are children given opportunities within lessons to say when they don't understand?
  - ☐ Are they explicitly taught how to listen, how to work together in groups?
  - ☐ Are there opportunities for children to interact and use language in different situations, with different people at an appropriate level?

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/more-resources/communication-friendly-checklists/>



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## Adapt your language

Universal



Time

Slow down...pause

Every interaction is an opportunity

So they can think and put their words together

Simple instructions

Use familiar vocabulary



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Universal

## Teach vocabulary

**Explicitly teach vocabulary**

**Review often**

**Link to other words they know**

**Use visual prompts and supports**

**Teach tier 2 words**

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Universal

## Encourage asking for help

- Create a **safe environment**
- **Praise** asking questions and asking for help

**Did they understand you?**

Check whole class instructions individually

Check in with them throughout activity/lesson

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## I CAN programmes

Universal

**Primary talk**

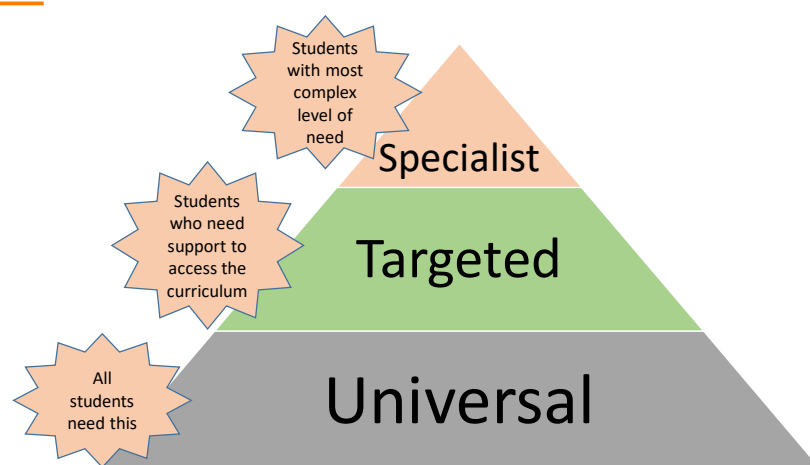


- Classroom environment checklist
- 12 key strategies: cross-curricular examples
- Resources and templates to adapt

**I CAN**  
helps children communicate

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## Targeted support: for children with SLCN / DLD



**I CAN**  
helps children communicate

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## Targeted tools and programmes

Targeted


[Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

**What Works?**



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## Targeted strategies: differentiation

Targeted



Planning for  
language  
issues



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## Blank's levels of questioning

Targeted

Planning for  
language  
issues

### Level 4: Analysing & reasoning

How could he... Why...  
What will happen if...

### Level 3: Stories and events

What will happen next?  
How does she feel? How are these the same?  
What is a... (definition)

### Level 2: More detailed here and now, describing things

What's happening? Find something that is a... (category) How are these different?

### Level 1: Here and now

What's that? Find one like this Where is X?  
Who is it?

Blank, M., Rose, S. A. &amp; Berlin, L. J. (1978)



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## Targeted strategies: more visual supports

Targeted

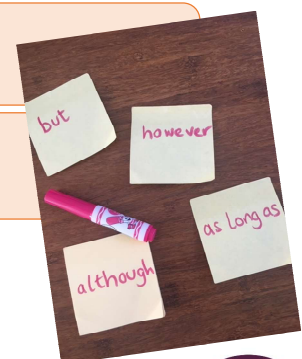
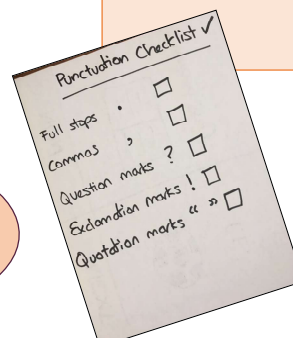
- Provide **visual structures/templates** to help structure written work
- **Word banks** e.g. of connectives, past tense verbs, adjectives
- Can use a visual **checklist** for editing and to support independence

Planning for  
language  
issues

First...

Next...

Last...



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## Ask them!



Ask!

What would **they** find helpful?

Vocab glossary

Print-out of powerpoints

Task flow chart

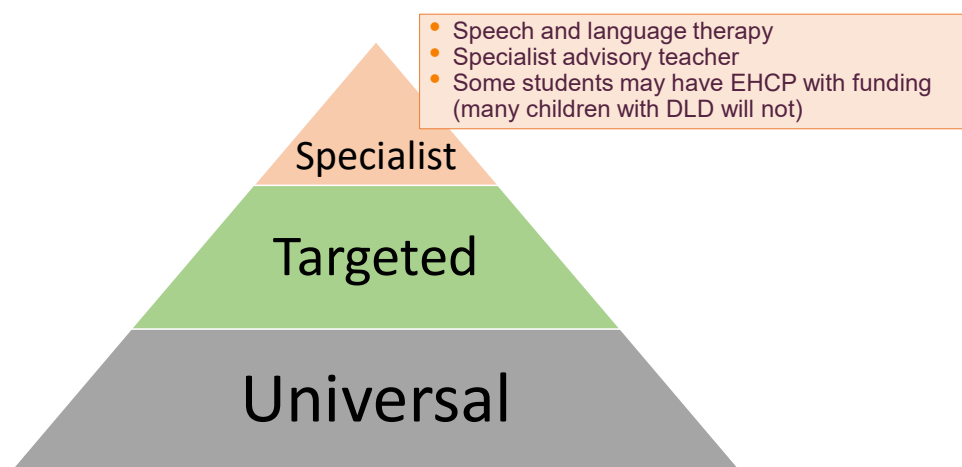
Targeted

Planning for  
language  
issues



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## Specialist support



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## Speech and language therapy support may include:

Specialist

- Assessment and diagnosis
- Support with the EHCP process (if appropriate)
- Devise and/or deliver programmes of therapy (direct or indirect)
- Support at particular times e.g. transition
- Advise/coach parents/carers, teachers, and teaching assistants in the use of specific strategies
- Raise awareness and understanding of diagnosis
- Teach child strategies to help reduce the impact of their difficulties
- Increase child's awareness to help develop self-esteem/advocacy

Some children's difficulties are life-long and cannot be "fixed"



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## How to get the most out of speech and language therapy support

Specialist

Work **collaboratively** – to impact on classroom practice

Work with SaLT when support required at key times e.g. transition – and **do not be afraid to re-refer!**



Using SLTs

**Include the child and family** in planning their support

Ensure support staff have opportunities for **coaching and observation** with SaLT



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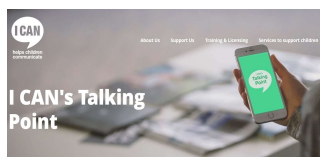
## Key messages

1. Acknowledge the problem
2. Identification
3. Whole school approach – universal, targeted, specialist
4. Quality first teaching
5. Strategic use of therapy time



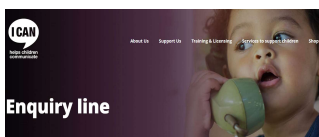
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## Further support from I CAN



Resources for parents and practitioners

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>



Speak to a speech and language therapist

📞 0207 8432544 ✉ [enquiries@ican.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ican.org.uk)



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## Further support from I CAN

In addition to the above, we are pleased to offer a series of pre-recorded webinars for teachers and school leaders which you can access below.

For Primary Teachers

For Secondary Teachers

For SENCOs

For Senior Leaders



Introductory Webinar



Intermediate Webinar



## Support for Children and Young People with DLD

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AWARENESS  
DAY

GET INVOLVED

NEWSROOM

CONTACT

DLD AWARENESS DAY

<https://ican.org.uk/educational-support-for-children-with-developmental-language-disorder-dld/>  
[www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources)



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