

My child has Developmental  
Language Disorder...

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Answers for Parents**

You may have questions  
about your child's language  
disorder; you are not alone!

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# What is Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)?



**A language disorder is when a child experiences persistent difficulties with language that impact their communication and learning in daily life. Specifically, Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is when these language difficulties are not associated with another condition (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder).**

## What if my child already has another diagnosis?

**If your child has an existing condition, it is still possible for your child to have DLD in addition. Your child's condition may be associated with language difficulties. If this is the case for your child, the correct term would be a Language Disorder Associated with X. "X" refers to your child's initial condition. However, it is also possible for your child to have DLD in addition to and independent of their initial condition.**

**Common Co-Occurring Conditions & Difficulties Include:**

- **Attentional or Behavioural Difficulties**
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- **Brain Injury**
- **Others - Ask your SLP**

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# How is this different than Dyslexia?

**There are many different areas of language including, the structure of language (e.g., forming words and sentences), conversational language, reading skills, and social communication (e.g., body language). If your child has DLD they may have difficulty with one or multiple of these language areas. Meanwhile, children with dyslexia have a specific difficulty processing and thinking about the speech sound system. This becomes especially apparent when a child has difficulty learning to read. Reading requires the connection between letters on a page and their corresponding speech sounds. Children with dyslexia have particular difficulty with this, whereas children with DLD do not.**

**Important to Note  
Children can have both DLD and Dyslexia**

# How did you determine my child has DLD?

**Following concerns from yourself or another person in your child's life such as their teacher and with your consent, special testing was conducted. These tests include a formal standardized test with several targeted questions administered to your child, a more informal test where a sample of your child's language is collected, and then a specific assessment that looks at how your child's language skills are impacting them in their daily life, such as an SLP observing your child in their classroom environment. The combination of these tests allows the SLP to get a full picture of your child's skills to fairly evaluate whether your child has DLD.**

**Check out Bonus Resource #4 for an example of one of the tests your SLP may have used with your child!**

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# Will my child grow out of DLD?

**Unfortunately, no, your child will not grow out of DLD. The label *developmental* language disorder may make you wonder if it is a temporary condition that takes place while your child develops their language. However, developmental only refers to the fact that the symptoms begin in childhood. DLD is a lifelong condition, but as your child grows, it can change with them. For examples, a young child may have difficulty putting words together into a sentence, but an older child or adult may have difficulty using complex sentences.**

**Getting support for your child during childhood will positively impact them!**

# What is going to happen to my child's education?

**A team at your child's school, including your child's teacher, their SLP, and other supportive staff, will work together to develop a special plan to help your child excel in school. It is called an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will outline any accommodations or modifications your child may need to help them succeed in their academic career. This plan will be re-evaluated each year to account for your child's growth. Additionally, your child's SLP will provide specific strategies to their teachers to support your child's language needs in the classroom.**

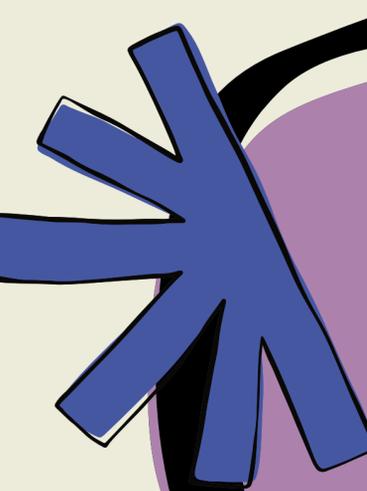
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# Are you saying my child isn't intelligent?

**No, DLD is a difficulty with language skills which is separate from intelligence. Your child can be very intelligent despite their difficulties with language. DLD is not a learning disability, however, it can be a risk factor for developing a learning disability as language is at the center of many academic skills. Nonetheless, this does not take away from your child's intelligence, it just means that your child may need support to demonstrate their intelligence.**



# Is this because I speak multiple languages to my child?



**No, research has shown that DLD is related to a problem with a child's language system within their brain; it is not related to which languages a child receives in their environment. Speaking multiple languages to your child does not confuse them; research has shown it can actually benefit your child's thinking processes. This common concern may have arisen because bilingual language development can look different than monolingual language development (e.g., if a child speaks English and Mandarin, their vocabulary in one language may appear smaller than their monolingual peers, however if we combine both the languages they know, their total vocabulary would be equal to that of their peers).**

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# Will my other children have DLD too?

**DLD is a disorder that can be inherited through genetics, such as if a close relative like a parent or sibling has it. This increases the chance of other family members having it, but it is not guaranteed. Past research has demonstrated approximately an 18% inheritability rate. The highest rate of heritability amongst siblings is within identical twins, similar to many inheritable conditions. However, every child is different, you should never assume your child will have a language disorder, but if you are concerned you can always bring your child to an SLP for assessment.**

# How can my child have a language problem if I understand them perfectly?

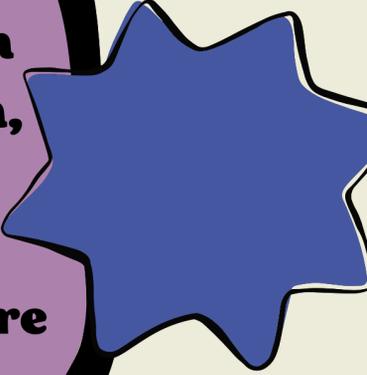
**Speech and language are two separate entities. Being able to understand your child clearly falls within the domain of speech. Speech includes the sound system that we combine to create words, but language is the system of combining words to create messages and meaning. A child with DLD is likely having problems constructing accurate structures of language (e.g., forgetting the endings of words, or forgetting little connecting words in a sentence), but their speech sounds are clear. Therefore, they are easy to understand.**

**Important to Note  
Children can have difficulties with speech & DLD.**

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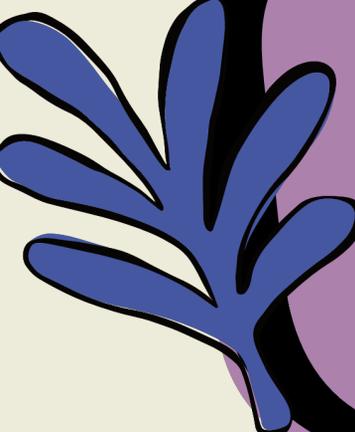
# What are you going to do for my child now?

**Your SLP will work with you and your child to develop a treatment plan that best suits your child's needs. This can include specialized work and instruction in the classroom, group therapy, or one-on-one therapy with the SLP at school or in a private clinical setting. The SLP will work alongside your child's teacher and any other important care providers in your child's life to support your child's language progress.**



# Will my child be able to make friends and be successful?

**Yes, your child will be able to make friends and be successful in their future education and occupation. Individuals with DLD may face more challenges along the way as a result of their language difficulties, but this will not prevent them from achieving their goals with the right supports. By taking time to learn more about DLD and support your child, you will help them reach success.**



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# Bonus Resources

**1. Check out this YouTube video to hear a young man talk about his experience with DLD:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrOISXtCgVA&ab_channel=BoysTownHospital)**

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**2. Check out this YouTube video to hear a mother talk about her daughter's experience with DLD:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MKUgQUhDPM&ab_channel=BoysTownHospital)**

**[v=3MKUgQUhDPM&ab\\_channel=BoysTownHospital](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MKUgQUhDPM&ab_channel=BoysTownHospital)**

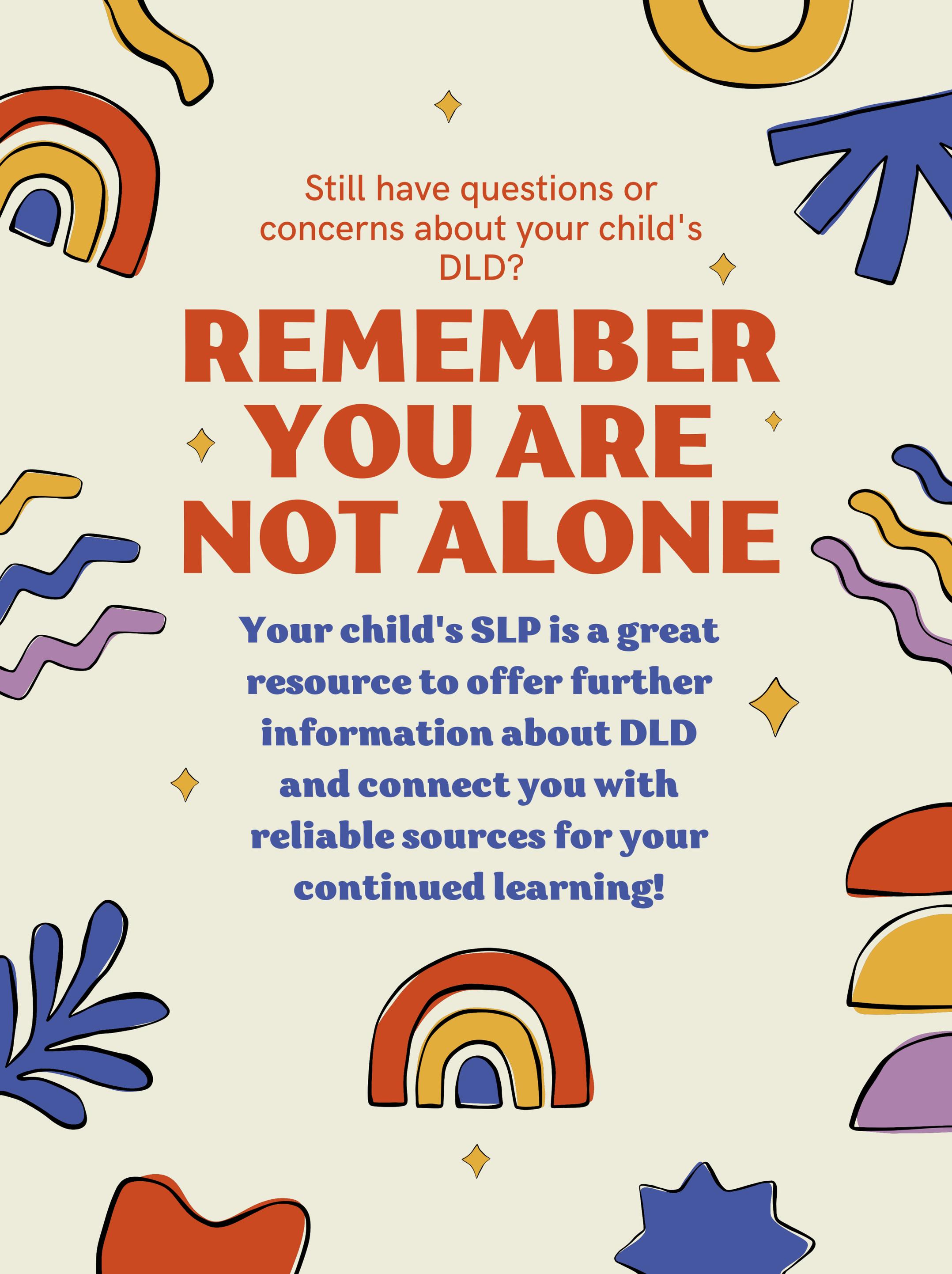
**3. Check out this YouTube video to hear a young woman describe DLD and her experience with it:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOfkj0dj_0&ab_channel=RADLD)**

**[v=rwOfkj0dj\\_0&ab\\_channel=RADLD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwOfkj0dj_0&ab_channel=RADLD)**

**4. Check out this website to learn more about one of the popular standardized tests used to determine if a child has DLD: <https://tillstest.com/>**





Still have questions or  
concerns about your child's  
DLD?

# REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

**Your child's SLP is a great  
resource to offer further  
information about DLD  
and connect you with  
reliable sources for your  
continued learning!**

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