

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

Script for Podcast:

Hello, everyone, and welcome back to the "Inclusive SLP Podcast," where I provide educators and SLPs with strategies and information to create a supportive learning environment for ALL students. I'm your host, Sarah Robinson and today we'll discuss Developmental Language Disorder. What is it? and what strategies can you use to promote inclusion and accessibility in the classroom for these students?

Music.... (Enegard, 2023)

So, what is DLD exactly? Let's break it down: a developmental disorder is a disorder that begins in childhood, or the developmental period, and it usually lasts for the duration of a person's life (Wallace, 2018). Developmental disorders can effect physical, learning, language, cognitive or social-emotional development (Wallace, 2018). So, Developmental Language Disorder is an impairment in a child's language development that lasts for the duration of a person's life and commences in childhood (Archibald, 2023a). It impacts how a child understands, uses and learns language, but the child has typical intelligence, hearing, and no other conditions that could be associated with a language disorder, like autism (Archibald, 2023a). It's still not entirely clear what causes DLD, but it's believed to come from a mix of genetic and environmental factors, with a strong genetic link as the disorder does run in families (Archibald, 2023a).

What might you notice in a child with DLD? A child with DLD may struggle to follow instructions; they may use shorter and simpler sentences and words when speaking (Archibald, 2023a; Malli, 2022). They may drop grammatical endings like the 'ed' at the end of the past tense verb called (Archibald, 2023a). They may also have difficulty asking or answering questions and difficulty finding words to express their thoughts and may also struggle to interact with other children (Archibald, 2023a; Malli, 2022). Two universal markers of DLD found in all the different dialects of English is the use of generic words (Archibald, 2023a). So saying "that" and "go" when friends may be saying "puppy dog" or "run." They may also use simple sentence structures like "I put it there" when other children say, "I put the baby doll in the toy box" (Archibald, 2023a). It's important to know that every child with DLD is so different, and although there might be a shared "core" of problems, it's not a one-size-fits-all set of characteristics, each child is unique (Archibald, 2023a).

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

So, at this point, you may be thinking... okay so let's just get these kids some help in language classes,... but DLD affects so much more than just English class. Think about it: in the classroom, language is EVERYWHERE. Language is involved in every subject in school because most teaching, assessment and feedback are provided through oral or written language (Archibald, 2023a). For example, teachers verbally instruct in science class with some

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

pretty complex academic words like "hypothesis"; they use "word problems" in math class, and even in gym class, instructions are given verbally, for example, multistep directions that explain a circuit the children must complete for fitness testing. Because language is the basis for education, children with DLD can end up really struggling academically (Archibald, 2023a). In fact, children with DLD are six times more likely than typically developing peers to have reading difficulties, six times more likely to have spelling difficulties, four times more likely to struggle with math, and 12 times more likely to have all three difficulties combined (so reading, spelling, and math difficulty) (McGregor, 2020). And that's just the academic side of school. Think about the social-emotional side: interacting with peers, participating in group projects, and presenting to the class. Elementary children with DLD are bullied at rates of 3x more than the general population (Orrego et al., 2023). Their language also often causes difficulty making friends and they experience high rates of loneliness and social isolation (Archibald, 2023a; Orrego et al., 2023). Children with DLD were also found to be twice as likely to have clinically significant levels of anxiety as a child, and experience difficulties in self-regulation (Orrego et al., 2023; McGregor, 2020; Archibald, 2023a). Because of these language difficulties, some children with DLD will also demonstrate behavioural concerns, like inattentiveness, anger, acting out (Archibald, 2023a)...for example, having DLD puts boys at 4 times more likely to participate in some kind of delinquent behavior compared to their peers (McGregor, 2020). Therefore, DLD affects academic achievement, social interactions, and emotional well-being because language is the basis of EVERY aspect of school... academics, friendships, behavioural regulation, and so much more!

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

So, how common is DLD? DLD affects about 7.6% of children, meaning that in a classroom of 30 students, at least 2 students will have DLD (McGregor, 2020; Malli, 2022). DLD is actually 46 times more common than permanent childhood hearing impairments and about 7 times more common than autism (McGregor, 2020). But hardly anyone knows about it. With DLD being so common, educators need to start talking about DLD in schools and learn strategies that can help to support these students!

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

So, How can we support kiddos who have DLD? Well, we know that children with DLD benefit incredibly from SLP intervention. However, there is a limited number of SLPs in the school board, and kids with DLD need much more support than, unfortunately, one SLP can offer (Archibald, 2023a; Archibald, 2021). Therefore, it is ESSENTIAL that SLPs and teachers collaborate because students spend sooo much of their time in school with their teachers (Archibald, 2021; Archibald, 2023c)! Teachers can implement some strategies that make all the difference when helping children with DLD achieve success. By now, if you've listened to my other podcast episodes, you've probably heard of the tiered approach to intervention. Today,

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

we'll focus on tier-1 strategies you can implement in the classroom for these kiddos. Let's quickly review the tiered approach and tier 1 specifically for those listening for the first time.

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

The "wait to fail" model was the traditional method of identifying students with learning or developmental disorders (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). This means that additional support or specialized instruction, such as SLPs, was only provided after the student struggled to learn - essentially when they failed. This approach was identified as having many drawbacks for students, especially for those with disabilities (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). For example, DLD can go unnoticed until a child begins to read. So waiting for a child to fail can delay intervention until they are older and already struggling to read and learn (Archibald, 2023b).

So the tiered approach was introduced! And this approach is a proactive system designed to identify students' needs and provide appropriate support (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). Rather than waiting for a student to fail, the tiered approach assesses students based on risk and provides different levels of support and instruction based on their needs in the classroom (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). The approach includes three tiers.

Tier 1 is the universal or primary intervention level, where all students are taught using sound, evidence-based teaching practices designed to help every student succeed (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). This tier focuses on universal strategies that can be implemented in the classroom, using a universal design for learning approach and differentiated instruction strategies (Archibald, 2023b). Teachers usually deliver Tier 1 interventions, which aim to create a supportive environment for all students (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). Strategies here include using multimodal presentation of material, by using auditory instruction, visuals, gestures and videos.

Tier 2 interventions are more targeted and focus on helping students who need more support beyond the universal strategies that are provided in Tier 1 (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). These interventions are designed for smaller groups of students who need more focused and specific help, such as extra help after school or co-teaching support in the classroom (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014).

Tier 3 strategies are highly specialized and intensive interventions for struggling students even after providing Tier 1 and 2 support (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). This level is more individualized and tailored to meet the student's specific needs (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). Interventions at this level may involve a multidisciplinary team,

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

including special ed teachers, SLPs, psychologists, etc (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014).

Today's podcast will focus on Tier 1 universal or primary intervention strategies that teachers can implement in the classroom to support students with DLD. These strategies focus on universal design for learning through multiple means of representation, engagement, action and expression, and they utilize differentiated instruction strategies through scaffolding and changing the teaching environment and context (Archibald, 2023b; Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014).

Music... (Enegard, 2023)

So, what are some of these classroom strategies?

Some strategies for making oral language more accessible in the classroom are as follows

- 1). So as you all know, teachers have a lot on their plate. They have so much to do when they manage the classroom, like the teaching, writing on the board, keeping students engaged, and managing behaviours. One strategy that is very straightforward and easy to facilitate and it really helps children with DLD better understand the language of instruction, is facing the class when explaining concepts, instead of writing on the board while explaining with your back turned towards the class (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). This way, children can see your face and they benefit from additional signals that are conveyed through your body language, which can help make speech signals more precise for them to process (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021)!
- 2) For children with DLD, using explicit language is crucial to their success and is a strategy teachers can readily implement in the classroom (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). Language like: "I expect everyone will be ready for their presentation by next Friday" can be confusing! Is the teacher saying next Friday is the date of the presentation? Are they saying it's a day you can use to prepare for the presentation, or are they saying the content for the presentation should be finished, but the presentation itself isn't necessarily due that day? Instead, try saying something like "You will present to the class on Friday the 14th." This statement explicitly states what will happen, helping children with language difficulties interpret the message. They know exactly what's going to be happening on Friday, that they need to present to the class!
- 3) Children with DLD often struggle to follow directions, particularly multistep ones, which can lead to inattention or incomplete work (Archibald, 2023c). To help them, a strategy you can use is to repeat and rephrase instructions or break them down into smaller components (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). For example, you could tell the class, "Take out your notebook and write a short story in it, and then draw a picture of that story." Then you can rephrase and repeat

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

the instruction by saying: "take out your notebook," wait until the students all seem to have their notebooks out and say, "Does everyone have their notebook out?" then, after a little bit: "Now write a short story." look and make sure the class is writing... if some students are not writing, you can repeat "its time to write a short story." Then, after a set amount of time, you could say, "Draw a picture of your story." again, if some students are not drawing, you could repeat, "It's time to draw your story."

4) Another effective strategy for children with DLD is checking for understanding (Archibald, 2023c). There are several ways of doing this. You can encourage them to use visual aids, like a flip book with a red light indicating "I need help," a yellow light indicating, "I think I get it, but I'm not 100% sure, please come check in with me" and a green light that indicates "I've got this!" Alternatively, you can encourage the class to raise their hands if they don't understand or have the whole class close their eyes and encourage students to raise their hands if they need help. Regardless of the chosen strategy it is so important that the teacher checks for their students' understanding regularly, especially those who have DLD, and that they encourage a supportive environment where its okay for anyone to ask for help (Archibald, 2023c).

5) Speaking quickly can make it difficult for children with DLD to process information. To help them, another simple strategy is slooowwwing downwwwwn to give some increased processing time (Archibald, 2023c). You can do this by slowing down your speech rate and adding more pauses into and between your sentences. For example, instead of saying, "Okay everyone, let's take out our textbooks and flip to page 5" you could say "Okay everyone [pause] take out your textbooks [pause] and flip to page 5."

6) To help children with DLD understand academically complex vocabulary, preteaching words can be very helpful (Archibald, 2023c). For example, in grade 3 science, the Ontario Curriculum focuses on Growth and Changes in Plants (Government of Ontario, 2022). It expects students to understand how plants are important to humans and other living things, and to consider different perspectives, and identify ways that humans can protect native plant species and their habitats (Government of Ontario, 2022). As a teacher, you could pre-teach words like habitat, native plants, coniferous, species, etc., by doing a lesson beforehand on the words and their meanings or giving a worksheet highlighting each word with a simple definition and picture. This would be awesome to help promote understanding for children with DLD! During the lesson, you can then emphasize the words by asking the class to discuss them and writing the words down as you teach (Archibald, 2023c). You can also post the keywords with pictures around the classroom as a reminder (Archibald, 2023c).

7) To help students understand key points from lessons, the teacher can include the entire class in a discussion before, during, and after the lesson (Archibald, 2023c). For example, in grade 5 health and physical education, students are expected to describe the short- and long-term effects of alcohol use and identify factors that can affect intoxication (Government of Ontario,

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

2019). The teacher could ask students in groups to brainstorm some factors that may affect intoxication. They can then take up their answers as a class while the teacher highlights and points out the key points from that lesson (Archibald, 2023c). Afterward, the teacher could ask students to draw their key takeaways from the lesson in their notebooks, and she could write her key takeaways on the board.

8) Another strategy is the use of a multimodal approach (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). Using a multimodal approach can make teaching and giving instructions more effective for all students, especially students with DLD (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). Instead of only talking or writing, using many different methods like gestures, pictures, visual organizers, written keywords, videos, and hands-on activities can be really really helpful (Archibald, 2023c)!

We know that around grade 3, students start reading to learn, and instructions are given in a written format (Archibald, 2023d). So, when it comes to facilitating understanding of written language, what strategies can we use? Many of the same strategies already discussed for oral language can also be used for written language. For instance, using explicit instructions instead of inferred instructions like writing "Due date: December 14th" rather than writing "this presentation should be ready for my review by next Friday," using multimodal methods like photos within the written text, allowing sufficient time to process written material, checking for understanding, identifying and defining complex vocabulary, and highlighting key points in class are all examples of strategies that work really well for written understanding (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d; Archibald, 2021). In addition to these strategies, you can modify worksheets and written materials by breaking them up into smaller paragraphs, adding more white space onto the paper, and using bullet points, making the written material a little less intimidating for a child who has DLD (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d; Archibald, 2021). Another strategy is to hide the content with another sheet of paper on top so that the child only sees one line or a couple of lines at a time (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d). Using visually distinct written sections, such as grouping information by instruction, step, theme, or activity, can also be really helpful (Archibald, 2023d; Archibald, 2021). For example, if an assignment involves writing a story, drawing a picture and presenting to the class, have each of these instructions in distinct sections to help the child understand that there are three different parts to this task.

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

So, all those strategies are great for helping children understand what you're teaching and your instructions... but it's also important to help children with DLD use their oral and written language - how can we help students express themselves?

1. Well one way that we can do this is by offering multiple ways for children to demonstrate what they know (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d). This coincides with differentiated instruction in that you will want to scaffold so that the child can complete the task

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

(Archibald, 2023b). For example, suppose that a child is struggling with a written assignment. In that case, you can help them show their knowledge by scribing for them or allowing them to draw to supplement their work. Instead of a written assignment, you can enable them to do it verbally or maybe with help from some sort of assistive technology (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d).

2. You can also help the child develop their oral and written skills through lots of practice with an assessment (Archibald, 2023d). For example, If a child is to write a paragraph about their family for an assessment, before doing the complete written task, the child could draw a photo, then they could use a graphic organizer that helps sort their thoughts, and then they could make a paragraph based off the two previous tasks (Archibald, 2023d).
3. Another effective strategy is explicitly teaching conversational rules for the class, like 'talk moves,' which helps children repeat, revise or add in information to the conversation (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). These are where you specifically teach students ways they can contribute to class discussions (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021). So, for instance, talk moves uses sentence starters for different purposes. If a student would like to agree, the script is "I agree with you because... " or to add information to the discussion, the script is "I would like to add on to what ___ said" so I would like to add on to what Noah said, for example (Archibald, 2023c). This can be helpful for children who have DLD because it helps to minimize some of the cognitive load and gives a mini script that they can follow that allows them to join into the conversation (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2021).
4. Another effective strategy is to use the "I do, we do, you do" format when introducing new tasks or assignments (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d). This helps reduce the student's cognitive load, allowing them to focus on the language involved in the task rather than all the associated instructions of the task (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d). To do this, the teacher would want to walk through her thought process about the assignment first, then, as a class, they would do it all together, and then the student would do it alone (Archibald, 2023c). This helps encourage language amongst these students since they've seen the instructions in action 2 times (minimum) before trying it by themselves!
5. Additionally, incorporating activities the child is interested in can help keep them motivated and engaged (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d). Let's say the unit is that grade 3 curriculum about plants: offer the child choices between different habitats that they can choose. This helps keep them motivated and on task since you're giving them some autonomy, and again, it helps encourage their participation and language use since they're more likely to be excited about the topic (Archibald, 2023c; Archibald, 2023d)!
6. Lastly, collaboration between SLPs and teachers is critical to provide students with the focused practice that they need to improve their language skills positively (Archibald 2023c; Archibald, 2021). SLPs can supplement what's being taught in the classroom.

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

For example, suppose a presentation about different types of native plant species is coming up in the Grade 3 curriculum. In that case, the teacher can collaborate with the SLP to have the SLP work on the specific vocabulary and skills needed for the presentation (Archibald, 2021; Archibald, 2023b; Archibald, 2023c). The SLP can also go into the classroom to help intervene, which is known as the 'push-in' model (Archibald, 2021; Archibald, 2023b). And studies have indicated that incorporating push-in services has positively impacted several aspects of abilities in children who have DLD, including vocabulary, storytelling abilities and phonological awareness (Archibald, 2021). So it is really crucial that our two professions work together to try and help these kiddos. We need to work in a collaborative manner!

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

These are all the strategies I have for you today. As always, please like, comment and subscribe to my channel for weekly podcast releases. And please tune in next week when we'll discuss strategies in the classroom to improve self-regulation!

Music...(Enegard, 2023)

Sarah Robinson (2023)

THE INCLUSIVE SLP PODCAST: DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER & TIPS FOR
INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM!

A #WesternDLD2 Final Project

References:

- Archibald, L. (2021, September 20). *Supporting a child with DLD in the classroom*. DLD and Me. <https://dldandme.org/supporting-a-child-with-dld-in-the-classroom/>
- Archibald, L. (2023a). *DLD_5Oct22_1.0* [PowerPoint slides]. School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Western University.
- Archibald, L. (2023b). *Unit1.3_SessionSlides* [PowerPoint slides]. School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Western University.
- Archibald, L. (2023c). *Unit4,4_SummarySlides* [PowerPoint slides]. School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Western University.
- Archibald, L. (2023d). *Unit4.7_Summary2022* [PowerPoint slides]. School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Western University.
- Enegard, A. (2023). I Was Messed Up - Instrumental Version [Recorded by Ella Faye]. On *Epidemic Sound* [Album]. Spotify.
- Government of Ontario. (2022). *Grade 3: Science and Technology*. Retrieved from the Government of Ontario Curriculum and Resources website: <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/science-technology/grades/grade-3>
- Government of Ontario. (2019). *Grade 5: Health and Physical Education*. Retrieved from the Government of Ontario Curriculum and Resources website: <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-health-and-physical-education/grades/grade-5>
- Malli, C. (2022, May 17). *Developmental language disorder in the classroom*. BC Teachers' Federation. <https://www.bctf.ca/news-and-opportunities/news-details/2022/05/17/developmental-language-disorder-in-the-classroom#:~:text=There%20is%20a%20hidden%20disability,autism%20or%20moderate%20intellectual%20disability.>
- McGregor, K. K. (2020). How we fail children with developmental language disorder. *Language, speech, and hearing services in schools*, 51(4), 981-992.
- Orrego, P. M., McGregor, K. K., & Reyes, S. M. (2023). A First-Person Account of Developmental Language Disorder. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 1-14.
- Robinson, K., & Hutchinson, N. (2014). *Tiered approaches to the education of students with learning disabilities*. LDatSchool. <https://www.ldatschool.ca/tiered-approaches-to-the-education-of-students-with-learning-disabilities/>
- Wallace, I. F. (2018). *Universal screening of young children for developmental disorders: Unpacking the controversies*. NCBI. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK554623/table/t01/> doi: 10.3768/rtipress.2018.op.0047.1802