



# E-DLD Newsletter: Autumn edition

## E-DLD in numbers



279 members (246 parents of children, 33 individuals over 16). Average age: 8.6 years for children and 35.7 years for adults



70% are from the UK, 30% are from 20 other countries.



51% have completed the yearly survey. We offer a monthly £20 voucher prize draw for E-DLD members who complete it!



40 research studies have been advertised



## Exciting News

### International DLD Research Conference 2023

We are happy to announce that E-DLD will be presenting at the **International DLD Research Conference 2023**. This conference is held by “The DLD Project” in September 2023. Our team will discuss research on socio-emotional and sleep difficulties in children with DLD from age 4 to 10. We would like to thank all our E-DLD Members – with your help, research on DLD is continuing to develop and flourish.

## What is PLUTO? – August E-DLD Event

On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, we were joined by PhD researcher Annabel Burnley who presented findings from her intervention for children with DLD. PLUTO is a parent-led intervention aiming to improve children's emotion regulation, anxiety management and self-esteem, as well as parents' wellbeing. There was time for discussion and questions at the end of the event. The recording of the presentation is available on our website and YouTube channel.



### Research Overview: Anxiety and SEB Difficulties in children with DLD

Burnley, A., St Clair, M., Bedford, R., Wrenn, Y., Dack, C. (2023). Understanding the prevalence and manifestation of anxiety and other socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties in children with Developmental Language Disorder. *Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders*, 15(1), 1–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-023-09486-w>

#### Key terms in this paper:

- **Anxiety:** Feelings of unease, such as worry or fear.
- **Separation anxiety:** Feeling anxious about being apart from family members or other close people.
- **Socio-emotional and behavioural (SEB) difficulties:** Difficulties managing emotions and behaviour. Includes emotion regulation difficulties, intolerance of uncertainty and insistence on sameness.
- **Emotion regulation:** The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences.
- **Intolerance of uncertainty:** Finding the unknown/unfamiliar distressing.
- **Insistence on sameness:** To prefer familiarity. An attempt to minimise uncertainty.

#### Aim of the paper:

Compared to their peers without language problems, children with DLD are more likely to experience anxiety and SEB difficulties. SEB characteristics (e.g., emotion regulation problems) may maintain or increase anxiety in children with DLD. Childhood anxiety is also associated with family stress. However, it is unclear how anxiety and SEB characteristics occur in children with DLD.

The aims of this study were to:

- Understand the levels of SEB difficulties and anxiety among children with DLD.
- Understand how and why anxiety occurs in children with DLD.

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## Research Overview (Continued)

The study included:

- An online survey, completed by 107 parents of children with DLD or children without language problems, aged 6-12 years old. The survey used measures of anxiety and SEB difficulties.
- Interviews were also carried out with four of the survey respondents, who were parents of children with DLD.

### **What was found?**

- More parents of children with DLD reported problems across all SEB difficulties than parents of children without language difficulties.
- The most common difficulties for children with DLD were anxiety, emotion regulation difficulties and insistence on sameness. When interviewed, parents agreed these characteristics were the most problematic for their children.
- Family environment was linked to anxiety for children without DLD, but not for those with DLD.
- Children with DLD who had more difficulties with intolerance of uncertainty and insistence on sameness also had more severe symptoms of anxiety.
- Children with DLD who had more emotion regulation difficulties also had more symptoms of separation anxiety.

### **What does this mean?**

Overall, parents of children with DLD cope well with their children's complex SEB needs. However, the findings indicate a need for anxiety management in children with DLD. Interventions focusing on intolerance of uncertainty could be especially effective. Emotion regulation training could also improve the management of separation anxiety in children with DLD.

### **Where can I read this paper?**

This paper is open access, which means everyone can read it. Please click on the link below to find the full paper:

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-023-09486-w>





## ***In conversation with... Di Van Der Walt***

### ***Who are you?***

I'm Di Van Der Walt. I am a passionate Speech Pathologist with about 15 years' experience. I own my own private practice – Perth Hills Allied Health where we aim to be innovative problem solvers for children of diverse needs. That means, we think outside the box when it comes to supporting and providing therapy to children. I am passionate in leading my team to achieve this goal and to making a difference in the lives of the children and families we work with.

### ***How did you get involved in DLD research?***

I've always had a passion for working with children, however my early years of experience were more disability focussed. When I started Perth Hills Allied Health, I started getting referrals for middle-primary children who had been to this therapist and that tutor and yet still struggling and everyone was saying there was nothing they could do for them. That led me down the path of investigating DLD for these children and 9/10 it was an appropriate diagnosis for them. I asked myself the question – how does a child get to age 10 or 11 and not have been identified as having language difficulties? I decided to embark on raising awareness for DLD, so that we can aim to have less children “falling through the cracks”.

### ***What is one thing you think needs to change?***

Funding support for children with DLD – not just in early Intervention, but right the way through their lives.



## ***Open access publications***

We regularly publish research summaries on [our website](#). Here are two of the most recent open access papers that we have summarised:

[\*Dyslexia and DLD: comorbid disorders with distinct effects on reading comprehension\*](#)

[\*The Genetic Basis of Developmental Language Disorder\*](#)

**To read the summaries, click on the name of the paper.**



### **Follow us on Twitter - @Engage\_DLD**

We let everyone know of our new research summaries when they come out - we aim for a summary once every two weeks!

### **Feel alone in supporting your child with DLD?**

Consider joining the "Developmental Language Disorder (formerly SLI) Support" group on Facebook. This is a private group for people affected by a DLD diagnosis, including adults with DLD and parents like you!

### **Have you heard of The DLD Project?**

They have collected a load of evidence-based information and resources – check it out here: <https://thedldproject.com>

