



Engage with
Developmental
Language
Disorder



Curtin University
UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education



E-DLD newsletter: Spring edition

Updates on E-DLD!



185 members (166 families, 19 individuals over 16). Average age of children – 8.6. Average age of adult – 37.2

72% are from the UK, 28% are from 14 other countries.

39% have completed the yearly survey. We offer a monthly £20 voucher prize draw for E-DLD members who complete it!

18 research studies have been advertised



Upcoming events:



21st March 2022 – about DLDandMe

We have launched a collaboration with DLDandMe! On 21st March (Monday), DLDandMe co-founders Dr Karla McGregor and Dr Sean Redmond will talk about what DLDandMe is, including its focus and why it was founded.

There will be approximately 30 minutes for you to ask questions. The event will be held at 7pm UK time/ 3pm Eastern Standard Time. Tickets can be found [here](#).

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E-DLD January event – Q&A with E-DLD team

In January, we hosted two Q&A sessions. The E-DLD team were joined by Dr Lisa Archibald, Western University to answer your pre-submitted questions. These questions were answered with reference to current research into DLD. Some of the questions discussed included how you can help your child, bilingualism in children with DLD, and how DLD is diagnosed. This event was not recorded to ensure people felt comfortable asking questions. However, some of our past events have been recorded, the event recordings can be found [here](#).



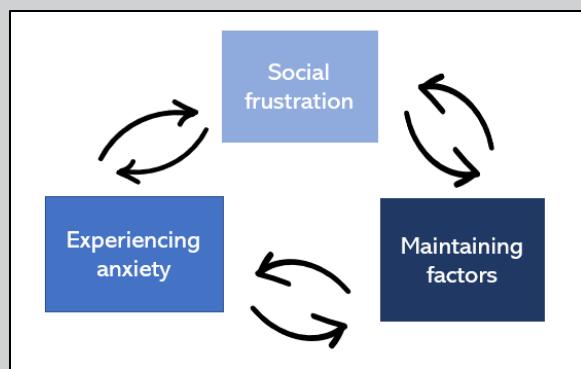
Research Overview: Annabel Burnley

Children with developmental language disorder (DLD) are recognised to often experience co-occurring psychosocial difficulties. This relates to their psychological health (e.g. mental health), social skills and behaviours. The relationship between these difficulties and their pattern of development is still not fully understood. Parents can provide contextual and observational insight into their child's behaviour and wellbeing. This study is one of the first to represent the experiences of parents raising children with DLD, to gain insight into the presentation of these psychosocial difficulties, and priorities for intervention.

After interviewing 11 parents, three core themes were identified. These each interacted with one another, contributing to the maintenance and worsening of each child's difficulties:

- **Experiencing anxiety** – it was common to experience constant uncontrollable fears and intolerance of uncertainty. As a result, children relied on attachment to their parent figure, receiving constant reassurance and strict routines. Parents suggested this was due to the DLD contributing to them feeling 'out of control' in their daily lives.
- **Social frustration** – this was experienced through a mixture of misunderstanding the intentions of others (negatively interpreting situations), being socially excluded by peers or socially withdrawing themselves (perhaps out of ease or avoidance, rather than preference).
- **Maintaining factors** – these included exhaustion (from daily social interaction and sleep disruption for some), lack of emotion regulation (resulting in unpredictable and quickly escalating emotional responses) and low self-esteem (present in older children who were more aware of their differences from their peers).

The figure below demonstrates how these three factors contribute to an ongoing cycle.



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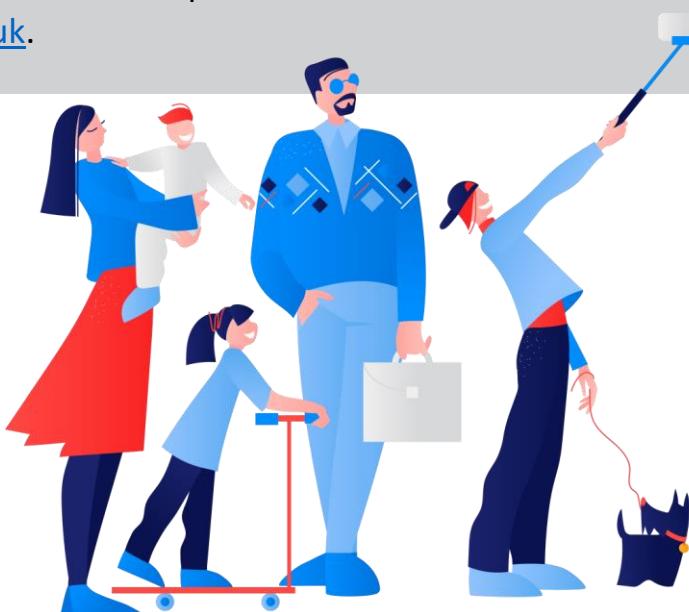
Research Overview (Continued)

There were two additional themes explored:

- **Child's relative strengths** – children were described as being very kind, creative and resilient.
- **Parenting experience** – parents all experienced huge levels of stress and a feeling of isolation. They felt a constant need to advocate for their child, and foresee future challenges themselves, due to limited public support. Their biggest pre-occupation was what DLD meant for their children in adulthood.

It will be important for interventions to focus on the thought patterns of the children to help manage the high prevalence of anxiety demonstrated in other studies. For example, focussing on the child's intolerance of uncertainty, negative interpretation biases and emotion dysregulation. Attention should also be drawn to the high levels of isolation and stress experienced by the parents. Interventions should also be mindful of the busy and hectic schedules of families raising children with DLD.

The current plan is to publish the findings in an online journal. Once published, a version will be released and shared that can be accessed. We have other ongoing projects, and are developing a psychosocial intervention for children with DLD. For more information about these please don't hesitate to email Annabel Burnley at ab3535@bath.ac.uk.



Research Consultation Opportunity

Would you be willing to give feedback to researchers on their ideas for new projects on language, communication and mental health? We are planning an event at St John's College, Oxford, on the 13th of April. At this event, 4-6 researchers will pitch their ideas for research, on the topic of language, communication and mental health. We are looking for young people with DLD (aged 15-17 years) and their parents to attend to give their feedback on researchers' ideas. Researchers will be asked to provide easy-access versions of their presentations, and share supporting material ahead of this event. Travel costs will be covered for families, lunch and refreshments will be provided, and each family will receive a £50 Amazon voucher as a thank you for their help.

If you would be interested in finding out more, please contact Hannah Hobson: hannah.hobson@york.ac.uk



In conversation with...

Dr Hannah Hobson – DLD researcher

Who are you?

I am a psychology lecturer at the University of York. Before this, I worked at the University of Greenwich, King's College London, and studied at the University of Oxford. I now direct the EMERALD lab (Emotion and Mental health Research in Autism and Language Disorders).

Tell us about your work with the DLD community?

I am especially interested in emotional abilities and mental health, and how language abilities affect these things. Most recently, I have investigated the mental health support received by children with DLD, and have been conducting projects on how others perceive young people with DLD. I have also been leading the Special Interest Research Group on Language, Communication and Mental Health (funded by Emerging Minds). This group aims to work out what research needs to be done next and hopes to encourage more researchers to work on this topic – we'll be publishing our report very soon!

What is the one thing you think needs to change?

If I had to pick one thing, I would say better awareness of language needs amongst professionals who work with children and young people, especially mental health professionals. These professionals want to help children to have better mental health, but they are not equipped to spot the signs of language disorders, or adapt their interventions to make them accessible to children who have language needs. We know that most children receiving mental health support have weak language skills, so this issue is probably affecting the majority of children's mental health care.

Open-access Publications:

DLD and externalising problems

Does parents' emotional regulation predict emotional regulation in children with and without DLD?

Types of intervention and funding used across services for children with DLD

Summaries for the above publications can be found on [our website](#)





Follow us on Twitter - @Engage_DLD

We let everyone know of our new research summaries when they come out - we aim for a summary each week!

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>

