

# E-DLD Newsletter: Spring edition

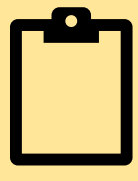
## E-DLD in numbers



250 members (219 parents of children, 31 individuals over 16). Average age: 8.6 years for children and 36.5 years for adults



69% are from the UK, 31% are from 19 other countries.



44% have completed the yearly survey. We offer a monthly £20 voucher prize draw for E-DLD members who complete it!



30 research studies have been advertised



### Upcoming event:

#### RCSLT - DLD Research Priorities

Would you like to discuss the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) priorities for DLD research?

This event is aimed at parents of children with DLD, adults with DLD, SLTs or anyone else interested in DLD research.

***Date to be confirmed soon!***

## Exciting news: our first paper has been published!

We are delighted to announce that we have had a paper published! This paper describes the profile of our current E-DLD database members so far. Many thanks to all the families helping to extend our understanding of DLD. We are now going to present our key findings in the research overview section below.



### Research Overview: E-DLD Cohort Paper

St Clair, M.C., Horsham, J., Lloyd-Esenkaya, V., Jackson, E., Gibson, J., Leitão, S., Botting, N. (2022). The Engage with Developmental Language Disorder (E-DLD) project: Cohort profile. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.12835>

#### **Key terms that are in this paper:**

- **Neurodevelopmental disorder:** a condition that impacts the development of the brain or nervous system.
- **Expressive language:** expressing thoughts through talking, writing, or using gesture or signs (e.g., asking or answering questions, describing events).
- **Receptive language:** understanding information provided in different ways (e.g., through sounds, words, movements, gestures, signs, or symbols).
- **Pragmatic language:** the use of language skills to communicate socially.
- **Co-occurring issues:** characteristics occurring at the same time as another neurodevelopmental or medical condition.

#### **Aim of this paper:**

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that used be called multiple other terms, including Specific Language Impairment (SLI). Previous studies have found that DLD is often linked with poorer social, academic, and mental health outcomes. Identifying DLD could help to make sure that individuals with DLD are given appropriate support to help them reach their goals. However, the understanding of DLD is still limited, and more research is needed.

Engage with Developmental Language Disorder (E-DLD) was founded to help link individuals with DLD with academic research. This includes parents of children with DLD and adults with DLD. The E-DLD project is the first international database for people with this language disorder. The aim of this paper was to describe the members of this database.

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## Research Overview (Continued)

### **What was found?**

Children of parent-members of the E-DLD database (196 parents of children under the age of 16.):

#### **Demographic details**

- Around 40% of the children are females.
- The average age is 8 and a half years.
- Most children speak only one language (English) and come from the UK.
- Almost all of the children have a diagnosis of DLD or an equivalent (for example, SLI).

#### **Language difficulties**

- Children in the E-DLD database struggle the most with expressive language and difficulties finding and using words. This affects more than 80% of the child members.
- Problems with receptive language, learning new words, pragmatic language and speech sound also affect more than half of the E-DLD members.

#### **Co-occurring difficulties**

- Anxiety is the most common co-occurring condition, affecting around 32% of child members.
- ADHD, dyscalculia, developmental co-ordination disorder and dyslexia are present, but affect less than 15% of children.
- Many children struggle with emotional, hyperactivity, conduct (behaviour) problems and peer-relationships.
- Children aged 4–10 years experienced more sleep problems than we expect to see in children of this age.

#### **Strengths of children with DLD**

- Caregivers often report that children with DLD are very kind and helpful to others. Creativity and good sense of humour are other strengths that most possess.
- Children on the E-DLD database often engage in sports and some of them attend social clubs, like Scouting.
- Most caregivers mentioned that their child is resilient and works very hard.

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## Research Overview (Continued)

### Adult members of the E-DLD database (20 individuals over the age of 16)

#### Demographic details

- 75% are females and the average age is 36.8 years.
- Most speak only English and come from the UK.
- Only 35% of adult members have an official diagnosis of DLD.

#### Language difficulties

- Like child members of the database, the adults struggle the most with word finding and expressive language.
- Problems with receptive language and learning new words affect more than half of the adults on this database.

#### Co-occurring difficulties

- Once again, anxiety is the most common co-occurring condition, affecting more than half of adult members.
- More than 30% also struggle with depression and dyslexia. ADHD is also common.
- Some adult members experience self-esteem challenges, and difficulty identifying and describing emotions.

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

Both children and adults with DLD struggle with expressing themselves through language. This happens even when they are familiar with the words they need to use. Recognising these challenges could help people develop appropriate interventions and support. Despite their language difficulties, children with DLD have many strengths.

A significant proportion of the children struggle with anxiety, but mental health issues including anxiety and depression seem to be highest in older people with DLD. This highlights the importance of conducting more research with adults with DLD. More information is needed, especially from studies with larger numbers of participants. It is also important that research continues to explore how best to support the communication and mental wellbeing of people with DLD.

Continuing to recruit children and adults in a database like E-DLD is very important. First, it helps researchers conduct their studies, by giving them the opportunity to recruit participants with DLD. Second, it brings information to individuals with DLD, parents, teachers, and other professionals about what it means to have DLD, and what support should be offered.

#### ***To read the full study, please visit this website:***

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1460-6984.12835>





## *In conversation with...*

### **Dr Shaun Goh – DLD researcher**

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

Dr Goh is a Lecturer and Research Scientist. Over the past years his research examined if and how language is related to socio-emotional mental health, across multiple populations of children in Australia, UK and Singapore. He received a PhD in Clinical Psychology by the Australian National University in 2015. He continues to be a licensed psychologist in Singapore and Australia.

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

“I think it was the ‘weight’ of reading study after study which follow DLD children as they grow up, which convinced me that more needs to be done for DLD in research and beyond.”

#### **What type of research are you involved in nowadays?**

“I am currently conducting two studies to improve support for children with Developmental Language Disorder in Singapore. The first study “MAPS-LEM” develops Singapore’s first mobile screener of English and Mandarin language for early assessment of pre-schoolers with language difficulties. The second study “RAP-iDLD” determines if a stress and anxiety intervention package can support primary school children who have language difficulties.”

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

“A compelling pool of evidence so that people come to think of DLD as a fact instead of a hypothesis.”

### *Open access publications*

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

*Working Memory Abilities of Children With Dyslexia, Developmental Language Disorder, or Both*

*Education, employment, and independent living outcomes in young adults with DLD*

*Relationship between empathy and friendship development in adolescence and how DLD affects it*

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>

