



## E-DLD newsletter: **Autumn edition**

### Updates on E-DLD!



161 members (147 families, 14 individuals over 16). Average age of children – 8.6. Average age of individuals over 16 – 36.6



74% are from the UK, 26% are from 12 other countries.



43% have completed the yearly survey. We offer a monthly £20 voucher prize draw for E-DLD members who complete it!



16 research studies have been advertised



### Upcoming events:



#### **E-DLD event in December – online talk**

- Come along to hear E-DLD co-founder, Professor Nicola Botting, talk about the adult outcomes for individuals with DLD. There will be an opportunity for questions at the end. The event will be held on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 1pm UK time. Further information and tickets can be found [here](#)

#### **E-DLD event in January – Q&A**

- We are hosting a Q&A led by the E-DLD team, where you can ask questions about DLD. This event will be held on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 9am and 7pm UK time. It is open to everybody and you can anonymously pre-submit your questions. Click [here](#) to register for tickets and submit questions for the 9am event. Click [here](#) to register for tickets and submit questions for the 7pm event.

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## E-DLD October event – meet other E-DLD members

On DLD awareness day in October, we held three socialisation events. These were an opportunity for E-DLD members to meet and share their experiences. In line with the theme for DLD awareness day 2021, the schooling system and teaching were discussed in relation to DLD. Members discussed their thoughts about and experiences of the schooling system as a parent of a child with DLD. Attendees reported that the event allowed them to hear other parents' experiences and feel less isolated.



### Research Overview: Chris Donlan, The SWAN Project

The number sequence can be challenging. “Thirteen” and “thirty” are hard to distinguish, and for “thirteen” children might be unsure whether to write 30, 31 or 13. That uncertainty may prevent a child from reaching their potential. The SWAN project explored the feasibility of using a computer game, delivered as an app on an android phone or tablet, to support basic numeracy for children with DLD.

Here's an example.



The player has touched 1, 2, 3, 4 in correct order. As each number is touched the spoken form of the number is played. Scores are based on the sequences entered. If the total score at this level reaches 70% of the maximum possible score, then proceeds to the next level.

Later levels of the game introduce longer sequences, concentrating on the teens, then decades, then more complex sequences. The gaming element of SWAN, the ‘worlds’ that the player passes through, the challenges and rewards of breaking through to the next level, are intended to motivate the player so that they get extensive practice and increase their number knowledge while having fun.

We took a single case approach, assessing individuals' number knowledge before and after playing SWAN for three weeks for around 15 minutes per day. Motivation was high, and children were able to play without supervision. Exceptions were found where number knowledge was already well established, or other challenges presented. Some children were able to progress through levels effectively, learning new sequences and showing associated increases in number knowledge. Others struggled to progress through the levels, but maintained high motivation, gained practice in number sequencing, and were sorry when the trial finished.

We conclude that it is feasible to deliver the game to children with DLD, that it is highly motivating, that children are able to play without supervision, and that it is likely to be useful for children struggling with basic number knowledge. We would like to gather more data, and to find ways of helping those children who find it hard to progress through the levels.

More information can be found [here](#).



We're excited to welcome a new member of the core E-DLD team, Suze Leitão!



## *In conversation with...*

### Suze Leitão

#### Who are you?

I work as an Associate Professor of Speech Pathology and the Director of Graduate Research in the Curtin School of Allied Health in Western Australia. I was born in London, grew up in Europe, trained as a speech language therapist at Sheffield University and lived in the UK. In a search for sunshine, I moved across the world and currently live in Fremantle, Western Australia.

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

I worked for many years in a Language Development Centre (an educational setting for children with DLD) and in private practice. I have always been curious - about what underlies DLD, how best to assess and gather data to understand profiles of strengths and weaknesses, and then finding the most effective therapy approaches. It was a short step to a PhD (in fact I started on one investigating social cognition and linguistic referencing 😊 before starting and completing another - on the relationship between speech and literacy difficulties). From there it was another short step to research as part of my career and the wonderful opportunities I have since had to supervise and contribute to the work of so many PhD and MPhil students within our group.

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

I think overall, what needs to change is for people to be as aware of DLD as they are of other, less common, disorders. I also want clinicians and families everywhere to have access to affordable, evidence-based therapy programmes.

## E-DLD advisory panel

On November 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, we held our first advisory panel. This consisted of a group of SLTs and individuals affected by DLD. The panel will meet four times a year to discuss the E-DLD project and voice any thoughts or concerns. The panel gave us important and helpful feedback, leading to some changes...

- The studies advertised in our research emails will now include the estimated time the study will take to complete.
- We have also added the average time it takes to sign up to the website.
- Yearly survey invites now inform you of the average time it takes to complete.
- Panel members liked the idea of a Q&A with questions anonymously submitted in advance, you can register for this January Q&A and submit your questions on the first page of this newsletter!

### Open-access Publications:

[History of DLD and rediagnosis of Autism](#)

[DLD in young people leaving care](#)

[Social confidence in young people with DLD \(engage-dld.com\)](#)

[Word-learning difficulties in adults with DLD \(engage-dld.com\)](#)

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



We now post recordings of some of our online events! Click [here](#) to watch Dr Umar Toseeb talk about social and emotional difficulties in young people with DLD.



### **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>

