

Centre of Excellence for Speech and Language Development

WOTP Mentoring Community of Practice Presentation

Carol Jazzar, M.Sc SLP
March 26, 2025



Who we are:

The CoE SLD housed at the EMSB is a provincial service designed to offer support and expertise in the areas of Communication, Speech, Language, Literacy, and Social Communication skills, herein providing evidence-based practices to school-teams in order to enable students who present with speech and language difficulties the opportunity to reach their unique potential.



TODAY'S OBJECTIVE




- Enable participants to gain a greater understanding of students presenting with DLD.
- Together setting a flexible, rich environment for our students ensuring that essential accommodations are put in place.
- Laying the foundation to using language for communicating, for learning, and building a life long skill to allow our students to achieve success, based on their individual potential.



Developmental Language Disorder


DLD – What is it?

- It is a language disorder of neurological origin.
 - DLD refers specifically to situations in which students have language acquisition difficulties for no specific reason (cause).
 - The language impairment arises from a dysfunction that affects the part of the brain responsible for language, hence triggering limitations in the areas of comprehension and/or expression.
 - The disorder is present from birth and is not the result of a trauma or injury to the brain but is specific and persistent in nature.
- 




Developmental Language Disorder

DLD – What is it?

- The disorder is present from birth and is not the result of a trauma or injury to the brain but is specific and persistent in nature.
 - The degree of severity can vary from mild to severe, with functional impacts in their daily environments and daily activities.
 - Specific behavioural, fine motor, executive functions, and/or attentional difficulties can accompany DLD.
- 



Functional Impacts of DLD

- 
- ❖ Social life
 - ❖ Learning academic courses
 - ❖ Competencies in Literacy and Numeracy are found in all educational trajectories, such as reading, writing, and math
 - ❖ Abstract thinking and Generalization
 - ❖ Self-esteem




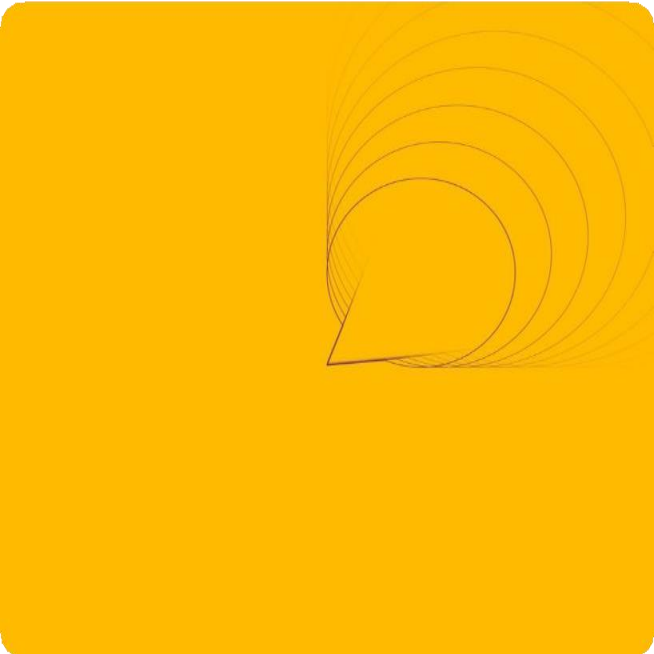
Know the signs of a language disorder



Language Disorders in the Classroom


Signs in the classroom:

- 
- Difficulty following language e.g. following verbal directions, answering questions etc..
 - Inability to understand abstract concepts
 - Difficulty understanding multiple word meanings
 - Difficulty learning new material, connecting previously learned information to new material



Signs of a Language Disorder Receptive Language (Comprehension)


Specific Difficulties:

- 
- Processing verbal information
 - Responding to questions
 - Following directions and instructions
 - Understanding relationships between words and meanings
 - Making inferences and verbal reasoning skills
 - Understanding and using comparative, sequential, spatial and time relations



Signs of a Language Disorder Expressive Language

Specific Difficulties:

- 
- Limited vocabulary
 - Finding appropriate words when speaking
 - Short or incomplete sentences
 - Sequencing and/or organization of narratives
 - Omission of information for intended meaning
 - Lack of flexibility in using syntax for speaking and writing




CLASSROOM TIPS AND STRATEGIES



FACILITATING STRATEGIES FOR ORAL COMPREHENSION

Comprehension difficulties may appear
Invisible.



However, with the right knowledge and
know-how, you can support your students
struggling at this level as if they were
Visible.



Flexible Teaching Rich Learning Environments for ALL

Flexibility for all students

Adaptations for some students

Modifications for specific students



ENSURING A CHANCE AT ACADEMIC
SUCCESS FOR ALL!



...Flexible Teaching Rich Learning Environments for ALL

UDL (Universal Design for Learning)



Friendly reminder: THE GOAL


Teach student in such a way that All learners can access the information, and to give them different ways to demonstrate their knowledge.



Flexible Teaching Rich Learning Environments for ALL

UDL

❖ Three main principles:

- 
- 1) Multiple representations (visual, audio, hands-on, etc. leads to learning strategies)
 - 2) Action and expression (Ax pen-paper, oral prep, group prep)
 - 3) Engagement: engage to motivate, relevance, create opportunities for “game-like” skill-building



Flexibility → Adaptation → Modification

Flexible pedagogy for all students




Adaptations: Adjust how they learn

Modifications: Change what they learn




Flexibility

For all students:

- Used throughout the year
 - Designed to match students' pace and learning style
 - Applied to the whole group rather than to an individual
- 



Examples of Flexible Pedagogy

- Assessing prior knowledge
 - Using visuals
 - Using auditory tools
 - Using tactile tools
 - Using kinesthetic tools
 - Individual, working in pairs or groups,
 - Using journal, writing log, teacher observation, discussion etc..
- 




Adaptations

For some students:


- Used throughout the year for learning and evaluation purposes
- Adjusts the HOW a student accesses the learning and/or assessments

Does not affect the difficulty of the task,
nor modify what is being evaluated





Examples of Adaptation (Accommodations)

- FM system
 - Enlarged font size
 - Assistive technology
 - Graphic organizers
 - Extra time
 - AAC systems
 - Repetition
 - Extra time for processing information
- 



Modification

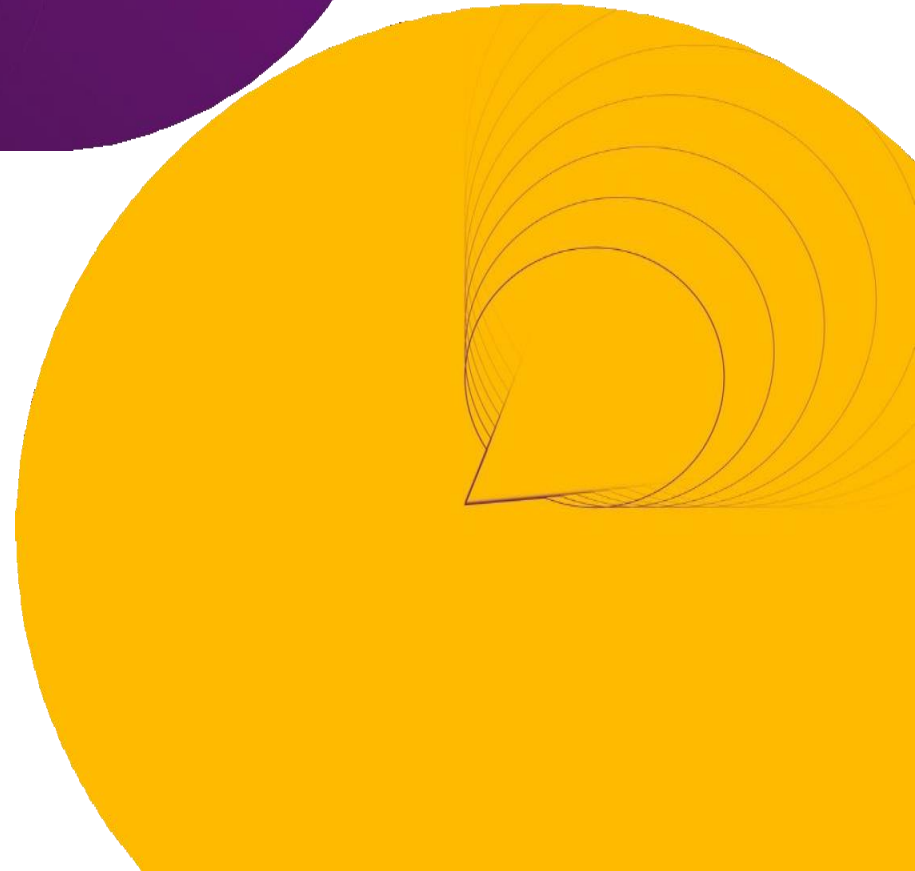
For specific students:

- Changes the What students learn
- Not expected to learn the same material as classmates
- May involve the student covering less material or less complex material
- What the student is evaluated on is different

Different content, Different requirements



MORE CLASSROOM TIPS





Accommodations & Classroom TIPS




Examples:

- Slow down instructions, reformulate/repeat
- Verify what the student has understood
- Give time to process the question
- Preview and review
- Warn before transitions




... Accommodations & Classroom Tips

- 
- Graphic organizers (Brain Frames, Inspirations software etc...)
 - Break assignments into small steps
 - Use of Assistive Technology (e.g word predictors, etc)
 - Laptop/Ipad
 - Grading written work primarily on content , not spelling




... Accommodations & Classroom Tips

- 
- Graphic organizers (Brain Frames, Inspirations software etc...)
 - Break assignments into small steps
 - Use of Assistive Technology (e.g word predictors, etc)
 - Laptop/Ipad
 - Grading written work primarily on content , not spelling



In a nutshell:

- Calm, structured, orderly, consistent classroom environment
 - Offer 1-2 verbal instructions at a time
 - Short simple instructions then verify what was understood
 - Multi-sensory structured approach to language learning that uses all 3 pathways of learning: visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile
 - Ensure time to process what was heard, time to respond, time to complete assignments
- 

ESCALADE PROGRAM

ESCALADE PROGRAM

ESCALADE – CIRRIIS – U LAVAL



ESCALADE PROGRAM

➤ An intervention program for adolescents with DLD

➤ Designed to help improve:

- **language**
- **communication**
- **socialization**
- **planning skills**
- **self-awareness in relation to DLD**

ESCALADE PROGRAM



Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Significant difficulties
in learning and mastering
language in early
childhood

Unknown
origin

1 in
14 children
live with
DLD

Difficulty
expressing and
understanding oral
and written
language

Functional impact
on lifelong learning
and socialization

Different
difficulties
for different
people



ESCALADE PROGRAM



PROGRAM GOALS

BLOCK A

Language: A TOOL FOR SELF-AWARENESS

I learn to know better

- Skills to establish good communication
- My qualities, strengths and challenges
- My communication challenges in relation to DLD

p. 4

BLOCK B

Language: AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS

I learn to communicate well with others

- By using skills to establish good communication
- By adjusting my language to the situation

p. 30

BLOCK C

Language: A TOOL TO PLAN AND ORGANIZE ACTIVITIES

I learn to organize myself according to my interests and needs

- By setting a goal
- By making a plan to achieve it

p. 67

The logo for the Escalade Program, featuring a stylized mountain peak composed of several concentric, overlapping semi-circular lines in a light yellow color, set against a solid yellow background.

ESCALADE PROGRAM

BLOCK A

- Activity 1:** Meeting the communication challenge
- Activity 2:** Using the right communication skills
- Activity 3:** Understanding DLD
- Activity 4:** Naming my qualities
- Activity 5:** Getting to know myself

4
5
9
19
23
27

BLOCK B

- Activity 6:** Analyzing video clips of communication situations
- Activity 7:** Understanding others
- Activity 8:** Adapting my interactions to the situation
- Activity 9:** Choosing a job based on my strengths and interests
- Activity 10:** Presenting myself in an interview
- Activity 11:** Improving my conversational skills
- Activity 12:** Integration activity

30
31
36
43
47
54
58
64

BLOCK C

- Activity 13:** Carrying out a team-based activity
- Activity 14:** Planning an activity
- Activity 15:** Occupying my free time
- Activity 16:** Exploring a new hobby

67
68
70
75
79

ESCALADE PROGRAM

Successful social communication

- Saying the **right thing**,
- to the **right person**,
- in the **right way**!

ACTIVITY 8

Adjusting my interactions ACCORDING TO THE SITUATION



I remember that I can put together different clues to find a person's social role*. This can help me communicate with them (greetings, politeness, topics of conversation).



How do I find
a person's
social role?

I gather several
clues...

- ▶ Objects that I see
- ▶ Actions that the person does
- ▶ Location where we are



- ▶ Words that the person says



*Material inspired by Pouliot and Vychytil, 2011.

Language is the vehicle

Language for:

- Communicating
- Learning
- Socializing
- Building relationships. Lifelong skills. Across the lifespan!



THANK YOU



CoE SLD Website

<https://coesld.ca/>

Launched in Fall 2023



Translated to French in Fall 2024

The CoE SLD Team

Coordinators:

Carol Jazzar, S-LP

Razan Khobieh, S-LP

Karina Ismail, S-LP

Team members:

Amanda Hajaly, S-LP

Michelle Sasson, S-LP

COESLD@emsb.qc.ca

