

Parent Coffee Morning

What is SLCN?

SLCN = Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

Speech is:

- Saying **sounds accurately** and in the right places in words
- Speaking **fluently**, without hesitation or prolonging or repeating words or sounds.
- Speaking with **expression**, with a **clear voice**, using **pitch**, **volume** and **intonation** to support meaning

Language is:

- Using **words** to build up **sentences**, sentences to build up conversations and longer stretches of spoken language.
- Putting information in the **right order** to make sense.
- **Understanding** and making sense of what people say.


Communication is:


- Language used to represent **concepts and thoughts**.
- Using language in different ways to **question, clarify, describe**, etc.
- **Non-verbal rules** of communication, such as, being able to listen to others, take turns and stick to the topic.
- Being able to **talk to people** and take turns.


What to Speech and Language Therapists do?

- Assessment and therapy for children and young people (0-19) with speech, language, social communication and feeding difficulties, and children with complex needs
- Work takes place within a multi-disciplinary team e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Paediatricians, Dieticians and Education
- Work with and within Sure Start Centres to promote speech and language development
- Therapy can be clinic based, within primary and secondary schools, within nursery, at home or through parent training courses.
- We work with children and young people with:
 - Feeding Difficulties
 - Complex Needs e.g. Down Syndrome, Fragile X, global developmental delay
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Language and Communication Needs
 - Developmental Language Disorder
 - Speech sound difficulties or verbal Dyspraxia
 - Dysfluency (stammer/stutter)
 - Cleft lip and/or palate
 - Selective communicators/Reluctant Talkers
 - Voice disorders
 - Hearing impaired
- Balanced system, no waiting list!

Key Definitions – Understanding ‘levels’ of provision

 **Universal:** Provision that helps ALL children’s speech, language and communication develop.

 **Targeted:** For children with identified SLCN (not necessarily having been identified by a SLT, others in workforce may identify there is a need). These tend to be provisions for high incidence SLCNs.

 **Specialist:** For children who require a bespoke/individualised approach / an approach which requires a type of intervention that may be highly specialised. School staff and parents have an important role in delivering this level of support.

Everyone has a role to play in delivering support across Universal, Targeted and Specialist levels. This includes, schools, parents and other professionals.

The underlying premise is that all children begin with universal level support and that targeted and specialist level provisions are added based on the child’s need at a given moment in time. Crucially, the level of intervention does not categorise the child; a given child or young person could be receiving support from different levels simultaneously. For example, a child needing specialist

- I’m in school very regularly. SENCO and I meet and speak often, concerns can be raised at any time.

- General overview of support:
 - SENCO raises concerns.
 - Referral
 - Classroom observation and gathering information from staff and parents
 - Further assessment if needed
 - Decide next steps e.g. universal support provided by school, targeted (provided by school- may have a treatment plan to follow), specialist input (block of intervention, modelling/ upskilling staff).

What can parent's and carers do to help at home?

- Get down to your child's level when speaking to them.
- Wait for eye contact
- Use gestures
- Face the child
- Follow the child's lead
- Break down instructions into smaller steps e.g. task planner (example)
- Visual supports
- Check back if the child knows what they need to do, get them to tell you what they need to do.
- Avoid using ambiguous language where possible e.g. idioms, expressions
- Colour coding (Language Through Colour)
- Encourage good revision/ study skills, e.g. memory techniques, mind maps (Language Through Colour).

What are teachers doing to support?

- Frequent discussions with us, and the MDT.
- Classroom audits and observations
- Following the strategies and recommendations above.
- Following recommendations from SALT.
- Following treatment plans in place.
- They complete assessment via Language Link – language abilities and speech needs
- They provide interventions and implement strategies and resources into the classroom.
- Identify as and when additional support is needed. Training and upskilling.