

Speech, language, and communication needs

What you will see (The difficulty/barrier, how this presents and the impact on the learner)	What can help (Provision – strategies, interventions and resources)	What have you tried?
Difficulties with saying what they want to and being understood (speech, phonology): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to communicate verbally. • Frustration at being unable to have their needs and wants met, which may lead to challenging behaviours. • Underestimation by others of what has been understood – reduced ability to express views and ideas. • Difficulties in initiating or responding to peer interactions, leading to social isolation. • Appearing withdrawn. • Potential difficulties with phonics; unable to produce target sounds and /or able to recognise target sound. • Speech sound errors impacting on spelling skills. • Reluctant to speak. • Appearing ‘stuck’ and reluctant to ask for help. 	• Small group or individual language sessions.	
	• Where needed, language programme devised by a SALT – awareness and implementation of any recommendations made.	
	• Allow time to respond.	
	• Opportunities for learners to feed back or answer questions ‘privately’.	
	• Provide alternative methods for communication of ideas – visual aids, whiteboards, signals or symbols.	
	• Model back corrected errors e.g. “It’s dunny today” - response: “yes, you’re right, it’s sunny today”. • Consider support approaches such as cued articulation.	
	• Small group or individual language sessions.	
	• Introduce a variety of language through rhyme and song.	
	• Attempts to speak are supported.	
	• ICT, symbol and communication (e.g. Makaton, PECS).	
• Small group or individual language sessions.		
Difficulties understanding what is being said and understanding and use of vocabulary and concepts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding of tasks or rules. • Difficulty with new information or concepts. • Increased anxiety due to feelings of confusion. • Anxiety and confusion. • Not following instructions. • Watching others. • Using ‘empty word’ (“thingy,” “stuff” “you know”). • Limited or unexpected responses. • Unable to use vocabulary in different situations and contexts. 	• Consider how many information-carrying words are used when giving instructions.	
	• Tailor delivery style, incorporating language modification techniques.	
	• Visual support (e.g. task boards, check lists, pictorial glossaries, pictures, demonstrations, story boards).	
	• Allow extra time to process what has been said.	
	• Get the learner’s attention before speaking – use of name.	
	• Check back that any input has been understood.	
	• Pre-teach topic vocabulary.	
	• Consider, in collaboration with the learner and parents/carers, peer awareness training.	
	• Ask what helps them and what works well at home.	
	• Whole school approach to the introduction of new vocabulary/key words/ topic words using multisensory approaches e.g. real objects, photos and pictures.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literal understanding. • Word-finding difficulties. • Not making progress in the development of understanding or new ideas through group discussion. • Appearing distracted or disengaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cue in by initial sound, syllable clapping, cloze procedure for written tasks or verbally, 'sounds like' questions and forced alternatives (choice of two). • Pre-teaching vocabulary (individual or small group). • Intensive vocabulary programmes. • Star Word and Word Aware approaches. • Software programmes such as Communicate in Print/Clicker 7. • Semantic dictionaries. • Language Link Resources. • Language for Learning 'what it is boards'. 	
<p>Difficulties with attention and listening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner is highly distractible (fidgeting, asking 'off topic' questions, low level disruption). • Learner may not ask for help. • Learner may be quiet and withdrawn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider seating position and field of vision. • Consider using peer grouping/buddying systems/individual talk partner. • Embrace the value of using simplified language, emphasising keywords and giving time to process and respond (10 second rule) and pace of delivery. • Visuals to support instructions and concepts (e.g. real objects, photos, pictures, symbols, sign and gesture). • Visual timetable (class and individual). • Short term interventions such as Active Listening group, Lego-based intervention, barrier games. • Provide task management boards. • Reduce outdoor distraction, e.g. blinds. • Consider using tabletop screens to reduce distractions. 	
<p>Difficulties with narrative (using structure and rules in spoken language):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not speaking in whole complex sentences. • Using few words. • Muddles retelling of an event. • Words in the wrong order. • Difficult for the listener to follow what is being said. • He/she may be used incorrectly. • Correct use of tenses could be inconsistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use drama, role play/experience to support re-telling. • Teach language sequencing and question words 'who', 'where', 'what', 'when' and 'why'. • Use of narrative programmes. • Language groups, e.g. Early Talkboost, Talkboost, Visual supports, e.g. Colourful Semantics, sequencing cards, prepositions. 	
<p>Dysfluency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats whole words or parts of words several times. • Stretches out sounds in a word. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time to start and finish. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unable to get started with a word or sentence/no sound comes out for several seconds. • Puts extra effort in to saying words. • Has tense and jerky speech. • Does things with body to try to ‘push out’ the word, e.g. foot stamping or finger tapping. • Avoids eye contact during a moment of stammering. • As children get older they may learn to mask their stammer by changing their words or avoiding talking in situations where they might stammer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down your own speech or pause to think to provide a helpful model. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model a relaxed, slow style of speaking and establish a calm classroom environment. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage ‘thinking time’. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge if the child is showing signs of anxiety or frustration and reassure them, e.g. “I can see that was hard for you, but you kept going”. 	
<p>Reluctant/selective speaker (child or young person wants to speak and are physically able but can’t; Selective Mutism is not a choice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not speak at all. • May speak only in certain environments, e.g. at home. • May only speak to peers but not adults. • May only speak to one adult. • Find it difficult to speak to you when anxious. • Does not smile, looks blank. • Move stiffly or awkwardly. • Find it difficult to answer the register, to say hello, goodbye or thank you. • Worry more than others. • Be sensitive to noise and other environmental stimuli. • Be very sensitive to the feelings of others. • Have good concentration skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove all pressure to speak and ensure that all associations with speaking are positive. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to talk, but do not expect it. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t remove the need for the child or young person to communicate. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond positively to non-verbal communication. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the child or young person’s strengths to them. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the child or young person jobs or responsibilities within the classroom. 	