

Glossary

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) – The term used to describe the different types of communication we use alongside or in place of spoken language. This can include gesture, facial expression, and body language which do not require any aids. It also includes communication requiring an aid such as pictures, symbol cards, communication books, and high-tech electronic aids.

Attention and Listening – The ability to concentrate on an activity, sound, or person for a period of time. Attention and listening skills are necessary to develop speech and language.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – A neurodevelopmental disorder (see below) characterised by difficulties paying attention, excessive activity, and acting without regards to the consequences.

Articulation – The ability to move the mouth, lips, tongue, and jaw to produce speech sounds.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – A Neurodevelopmental Disorder (see below) characterised by difficulties with communication, social interaction, and rigid thinking.

Bilingualism/multilingualism – The ability to understand and use two or more languages in everyday life.

Cleft Lip/Palate – A gap or split in the upper lip and/or roof of the mouth (palate). It is present from birth and can have an impact on a child's speech development.

Communication aid – Something that helps an individual to communicate more effectively with people around them. This can include body language, gesture, vocalisation or signing as well as communication books and high-tech devices. Communication aids are also referred to as AAC devices.

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) – A difficulty with understanding and/or using spoken language. DLD begins in childhood and can persist into adulthood.

Delay – when a child is developing speech, language or communication skills in a typical manner, but is doing so more slowly than other children his or her age.

Disorder – when a child is not developing their speech, language or communication skills in a typical manner.

Down's Syndrome – when babies are born with an extra chromosome. Down's Syndrome is usually associated with learning difficulties.

Dysfluency – Another term for a stammer or a stutter.

Early Years – The years in a child's life from ages 0-5.

Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) – A document that outlines any special educational needs a child has, and the provision a local authority must put in place to help them.

Educational Psychologist (EP) – Professionals responsible for using psychological assessments to support the learning and wellbeing of children and young people.

Expressive Language – A child’s ability to use words (or signs / symbols) and put them into sentences to convey meaning.

Functional Communication - A child’s (or adult’s) ability to communicate wants and needs, feelings and thoughts as effectively as possible.

Grammar – A structural set of rules for language that are used to convey meaning. This can include the use of tense (i.e. “I walkeded” vs “I am walking”), pronouns (i.e. he/she/they or him/her/them) and plurals (i.e. “cats” or “feet”).

Makaton – A language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate.

Neurodevelopmental Disorder – A difficulty caused by the way the brain develops in pregnancy and childhood, examples are Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Package of Care (POC) – The support offered to children who meet the criteria for Speech and Language Therapy input. This could include assessment and treatment of the communication difficulty and joint working with parents and professionals including school/nursery staff.

Receptive Language / Comprehension – A child’s understanding of language (of what people say to them).

Social Communication – The ability to use language or non-verbal communication to interact with others for a variety purposes. These could include greetings, making requests, or informing. To use effective social communication, children need to understand the “rules” of interaction e.g. taking turns, listening to others.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for children to learn than most children of the same age. Children with Special Educational Needs are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children of their age.

Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) – A teacher who is responsible for special educational needs in school. Every school in the UK is obliged to employ a SENCO as they ensure all students with learning disabilities are well equipped to obtain the right help and support they need at school.

Speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) – An umbrella term for difficulties with communication.

Speech Sound Disorder - A term used to cover a range of difficulties that some children have with their speech (pronunciation of sounds in words).

SLT/SALT - Speech and Language Therapy/Therapist. Professionals responsible for the assessment and treatment of speech, language, and communication needs. Speech and Language Therapists are also involved in assessing and treating children who have difficulties with eating, drinking, and swallowing.

Stammer/ Stutter - A disruption in the flow of speech. This may be repetitions- where the individual repeats parts of words or whole words, prolongations- where sounds are stretched out, or blocks – where sounds get stuck and won't come out. Stammering can have an impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing. See our 'Stammering' page for more information.

Voice Disorder – When a child or adult has a hoarse voice or problems with their pitch, volume or tone.