

# Disordered language development and communication

This brief factsheet highlights some of the main impacts of disordered language development on communication.

It identifies general practical action you can take to remove barriers to participation that people with disordered language development may face. Remember every person is different.

An individual with disordered language development may have difficulty with:

- understanding complex spoken or written language, instructions or questions
- reading
- spelling and grammar
- taking in and making sense of information
- accessing the most important items of information
- understanding jargon, irony, humour or euphemisms.

When expressing an opinion an individual with disordered language development may have difficulty with:

- forming complex spoken or written language
- asking questions or obtaining information
- writing, spelling and grammar
- expressing thoughts or opinions coherently
- finding the right words
- responding quickly.

## Key actions

To assist a person with disordered language development to express themselves fully, you should offer:

- extra time to respond to a question or express their views
- assistance to ask questions or obtain information
- written materials produced in a clear and precise format
- access to alternative, non-verbal forms of communication, such as symbols or photographs.

## **Children with disordered language development**

Children with disordered language development experience particular difficulties (for example, in engaging in school).

**You can help** by:

- identifying how their language disorder impacts on them
- listening to and consulting with children about their speech and language difficulties
- being positive and encouraging
- involving their parents
- taking account of their age and different levels of ability
- giving them time and plenty of information
- creating a communication friendly environment.

### **Key actions**

When communicating with a child with disordered language development you can help by:

- structuring discussions as short conversations
- keeping the conversations interesting and checking the child has understood
- not asking too many questions
- keeping information concrete and specific
- using video, diaries, art, games or drawings to support their conversation, if required.

### **Further information:**

Afasic Scotland ([www.afasicscotland.org.uk](http://www.afasicscotland.org.uk))  
I CAN ([www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk))