

# Parent Guide



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games



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experiments



word searches



## What is this resource and how do I use it?

Wondering what speech and language therapy is? This guide aims to answer your questions about this form of SEND support. Find out what a Speech and Language Therapist is, who they support and what they can do to help your child.

## What skills does this practise?

SEND Support

Parent Information

Speech and Language

Communication

## Further Activity Ideas and Suggestions

Explore more parent guidance about SEND by visiting [this category](#) at the [Parents' Hub](#). You might want to browse through this [Speech And Language Therapy CPD Glossary](#) to understand the terminology frequently used by SLTs.

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# Demystifying SEND Support for Parents:

## Speech and Language Therapy



Your child's teacher, SENDCo or a health professional might refer your child for speech and language therapy. Explore this guide to find out what an SLT is and how they can help your child.

# What is a speech and language therapist?

A speech and language therapist (SLT) is an allied health professional who supports people of all ages with their speech, language and communication, eating, drinking and swallowing across a range of settings. Their aim is to help people communicate more effectively or help them eat and swallow.



SLTs in the UK are registered with the HCPC (Health Care Professionals Council) and are also members of the RCSLT (Royal Council of Speech and Language Therapists). You can visit the [RCSLT website](#) for further information. All SLTs have a degree and many also have postgraduate training.

# How will an SLT help my child?

In schools, children's centres and other settings, an SLT will assess the needs of your child then use their specific knowledge and skills to support them. They will work closely with you, your child's teacher and the school SENDCo, as well as psychologists, doctors and occupational therapists to tailor support to your child's individual needs.



An SLT will develop a personalised plan for each child they work with, containing a mixture of activities. For example, they might work on early play, social games and communication skills or they might focus on eating and swallowing. It depends entirely on the specific needs of each child. This plan, and the activities within it, will be shared with school and home.

# How will an SLT help my child?

An SLT can:

Help your child better use or understand spoken language

Support your child with their speech and articulation

Help your child with a specific speech difficulty (e.g. producing a certain sound)

Improve your child's social communication skills

Help your child with eating, drinking and swallowing

Support your child to become more fluent in their spoken language (e.g. support with stammering)



# Who do SLTs support?

Speech and language therapists provide support and advice for children with a range of different needs. Here are some examples:

Autistic children and children who have difficulties with social interaction

Children who need support with attention and listening skills

Children with voice disorders

Children with speech sound delay and speech sound disorders

Children with language delay and language disorders

Children with physical disabilities

Children with specific difficulties in producing sounds

Children with selective mutism

Children with feeding, eating or swallowing difficulties

Children with word finding and memory difficulties

Children with learning difficulties

Children with hearing impairments

Children who stammer

# What is speech?

Speech is the production of sounds and the ability to join these sounds together to form words and sentences. Different sounds develop at different times although, generally, speech development follows a typical sequence. It's important to remember that each child's speech may develop at a different rate.



## What is language?

Language is being able to understand spoken words and form your ideas into an appropriate, grammatically correct sentence. It is the process of using the sounds and words you know to convey a message.

Receptive language is the ability to understand spoken language.

Expressive language refers to the ability to use words to express ideas.



# What is communication?

Communication is the transferral of information. It is the development of skills to say something in the right way, at the most appropriate time, in the best way. Communication involves some kind of interaction, such as one person speaking and one person listening. Not all communication involves speech; it can also use visual signs or symbols and non-verbal cues such as body language, gestures and facial expressions.



## What Is SLCN?

You may have heard or seen the acronym SLCN. This stands for Speech, Language and Communication Needs; it is the term used to describe difficulties in one or more areas of communication. Some children may need support with speech but not language or communication. Some children may need support with all three areas.



# What is the difference between delay and disorder?

Speech or language delay is when speech or language development follows the typical pattern, but is behind that of the child's peers. This is a common SLCN.

Speech or language disorder means development is not following the typical pattern; disorders are less common.



# Top Tips for Supporting Your Child through Speech and Language Therapy

Ask your child's speech and language therapist about their specific impairment, how you can help at home and what support is in place at school. Being informed will help you to feel empowered.

Be patient and do not put pressure on your child or yourself.

Be your child's advocate and speak up if you or your child need additional support.

Give detailed praise so your child knows how proud you are of them - not for progress, but for attitude.

You may find it useful to explore visual support at home such as a visual timetable for getting ready for school.

Join groups for parents of children with SLCN to share practical advice and emotional support.



## Disclaimers

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

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