**Bury Children’s Trust Lunchtime Learning**



**Date: Tuesday 14th January 2020**

**Who does it affect and what are the signs and symptoms?**

More than 10% of children and young people have long-term speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) which create barriers to communication or learning in everyday life. That’s 2-3 children in every classroom.

7.6% have developmental language disorder *(A condition where children have problems understanding and/or using spoken language. There is no obvious reason for these difficulties – no hearing problem or physical disability explains them).*

2.3% have language disorders associated with another condition such as autism or hearing impairment.

SLCN also include conditions such as speech difficulties, stammering and many others. Children living in areas of social disadvantage are at much higher risk, with around 50% of children starting school with delayed language and other identified SLCN (Bercow 10 years on).

The term speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) describes difficulties across one or many aspects of communication including:

**Speech**

* Problems with producing speech sounds accurately e.g. may say “gool” for school
* Stammering e.g. repeating (b b but or my my), stretching out sounds, blocking
* Speaking with expression and a clear voice

**Language**

* Problems understanding language (making sense of what people say)
* Problems using language (words and sentences)

**Communication**

* Problems interacting with others. For example, difficulties understanding the non-verbal rules of good communication or using language in different ways to question, clarify or describe things

**Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs: a focus on early years and primary school age**

**Summary of Topic**

The ability to communicate is fundamental to learning, to relationships and to life chances.

Many children are starting school with significant speech, language and communication needs and it is essential that these children are identified and supported early on.

**What do we all need to do?**

The number of children with SLCN is hugely underestimated yet there are 2-3 children in every classroom. It is paramount that everyone surrounding the child has knowledge and skills about speech, language and communication development and what difficulties they may present with.

Here are a few general strategies you can use to support children with SLCN:

* **Model back** **errors** your child makes rather than asking them to say it again or repeat after you e.g. if child says “gool” you say “yes school, time for school”.
* **Observe, wait and listen** during play and interactions. This allows your child more time to process what has been said and to make their response.
* **Create opportunities for your child to practice communicating** eg, place motivating items in sight but out of reach, give toys or food bit by bit rather than all at once, ‘forget’ to do a key step in a routine such as putting bubbles in the bath or giving a spoon for cereal.
* **For every 1 question you ask**, eg, “what’s this?”, “what are you doing?”, “what have you got?” **make 4 comments**. You can do this by repeating back what your child says and expanding on it by a word or two, eg child says “toast?” adult responds: “toast has all gone”.
* **Make it visual** – use objects, gestures and pictures to reinforce the spoken word/ message. This makes it clearer and easier to understand for many children.

The following websites offer a wealth of information and advice about SLCN;

* ICAN – Children’s Communication Charity <https://ican.org.uk/>
* Talking Point (including ages and stages) <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>
* DLD and Me <https://dldandme.org/>
* Hungry Little Minds [Hungry Little Minds](https://www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/service.page?id=GmlTHOnlmgo) (Bury Directory Page)
* BBC’s Tiny Happy People [Tiny Happy People](https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people) (Bury Directory Page)

**What support is available in Bury?**

The Bury Community Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy service provides treatment, support and care for children (birth to 18 years) who have difficulties with communication, speech and language or with eating, drinking and swallowing. We offer differential diagnosis, advice and specialist intervention for children with a wide variety of speech, language and communication needs. We offer appointments at various community clinics in the Bury area.

You can find **contact details and general information/advice** on the Bury Directory website [at this link](https://www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/service.page?id=B2kghyM7RKY). You will also find information about how to request an assessment and how to refer. Please contact the service if you have any concerns about a child and wish to speak to somebody.

**Key contacts**

**Presenter: Kim Hough, Speech and Language Therapist**

**Telephone: 0161 762 1688**

**Please refer to our Bury Directory page for all current contact information;**

<https://www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/service.page?id=B2kghyM7RKY>