



“My child finds it difficult to understand people and can’t put sentences together”

This could indicate a language impairment, sometimes called a language disorder.

A language impairment can affect a child’s ability to understand (receptive language); to put spoken sentences together (expressive language); to develop vocabulary (word recognition and naming skills); and to recall what has been said (auditory memory). Some children recognise words but can’t recall them for use in spoken sentences (word finding difficulties).

Children often present with speech impairment in addition to their language impairment. Language impairment may occur in isolation (a primary condition) or secondary to other conditions (including neurological, cognitive, social-communication, hearing, behavioural and emotional impairments). It is important for the team around the child to profile the child’s verbal and non-verbal skills to inform the best interventions for the child.

Referral to a speech and language therapist can add value by:

- Developing a programme of therapy
- Integrating therapy targets into the educational curriculum
- Training and supporting other professionals working with the child
- Supporting parents to make communication easier

