



# **The Impact of Developmental Language Disorder on Overall Child Development: Speech and Language Therapists' Perspectives**

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**Student Name:** Fiona Tuite

**Student Number:** 10380423

**Project Supervisor:** Mark Byrne

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# Abstract

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**Introduction:** This study investigates Speech and Language Therapists' (SLTs) perspectives on the impact of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) on overall child development. Research on this topic to date has used mostly quantitative or mixed methods approaches. This research can help provide education to parents and teachers of children with DLD and ensure appropriate support is provided to the children themselves.

**Methods:** This was a semi-structured interview qualitative research study. Five SLTs who each had experience of working with a minimum of four children with DLD took part in the study. The data collected was analysed using NVivo-12 software using a thematic networks analysis framework proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001).

**Results:** Four global themes emerged from the data: Psychological Factors, Educational Factors, Social Factors and Mitigating Factors.

**Discussion:** The results of this study mirror previous results which show that many other aspects of a child's life outside of their language skills can be impacted by having DLD.

**Conclusion:** The findings from this research have implications for how DLD is understood and treated. It suggests a need for greater understanding of the disorder and greater collaboration between professionals.

# Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

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## **1.1 Introduction**

This research study aims to explore and describe Speech and Language Therapists' (SLTs) perspectives on the impact of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) on a child's overall development. Understanding how DLD impacts a child may help to provide guidance to the parents and children of these children. Much of the previous research in this area has been conducted using predominantly quantitative or mixed-methods analysis. This study will use interviews to and qualitative thematic network analysis to provide an in-depth exploration of the topic.

This chapter will provide background information on the topic, a review of the relevant literature in this area and will outline the design, aims and objectives of the current research study.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

### ***1.2.1 Introduction***

The ability to learn a language and communicate through it is at the pinnacle of human evolution. Language can be defined as a system of symbols and rules used for meaningful communication (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). Language serves a variety of functions, such as requesting and sharing information, expressing feelings and understanding what is communicated by others. It is crucial to learning and is the tool with which one navigates the social world. Various theorists have debated how children acquire language, however it is generally accepted that all children are born with some innate capacity to learn language once they are exposed to it. Children appear to acquire language effortlessly, merely by being in

the presence of adults who communicate with them. It is understandable therefore that any disruption in this ability to learn language must have significant consequences in many facets of life. It could reasonably be assumed that any difficulties in acquiring a person's native language must be obvious and easy to spot (Paul & Norbury, 2012).

### ***1.2.3 Developmental Language Disorder***

Despite this, there is little knowledge among the general public of the difficulties some children have in acquiring language and these difficulties often go unacknowledged (IASLT, 2017). Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is the term used to describe the language problems experienced by some children, which are likely to last into at least middle childhood and have a significant impact on social interactions and education (Bishop et al., 2017). These language difficulties are not as a result of any other condition. DLD presents in 7% of the population, equating to on average in one in 30 children in a classroom (Laasonen et al., 2018, Afasic, 2012). Children with DLD are largest 'disability group' in preschool-aged children and at present, there are approximately 70,000 children under the age of eighteen in Ireland with DLD (Laasonen et al., 2018, IASLT, 2017). These prevalence rates are in fact higher than those of other developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, despite these being more well-known within the general population (IASLT, 2017).

Bloom and Lahey (1978) proposed that language is comprised of three major components: 'Form', which includes syntax, morphology and phonology, 'Content', which comprises the semantic parts of language such as vocabulary and knowledge of objects and events and finally 'Use' which refers to pragmatics or the social use of language. Children with DLD may present with difficulties in one or more of these areas. Additionally, they can present with difficulties in these areas either receptively, expressively or both. At present no

underlying cause of DLD is known, however a genetic link has been suspected due to the increased prevalence among children with a strong family history of DLD (Paul & Norbury, 2012).

DLD was previously understood under a broad variety of names, including Specific Language Impairment (SLI) and Specific Language Disorder (SLD). In 2017 the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) adopted the label 'DLD' as their official terminology, in keeping with international consensus (IASLT, 2017). The Department of Education and Skills previously outlined stringent diagnostic criteria for the heretofore used label of Specific Language Impairment. Children must fall within the average range or above for non-verbal or performance ability on a standardised test of intelligence. In addition, children's performance in one or more areas on a standardised language assessment must fall two standard deviations or more below the mean (Kilroy, 2002)

#### ***1.2.4 International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health***

In 2001, the World Health Organisation published their International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework. This framework revolutionised the conceptualisation of communication disorders including DLD, by advocating for a multidimensional approach to assessment and treatment (WHO, 2004). WHO posited that disability is a result of a dynamic biopsychosocial model, which acknowledges the biological, individual and social factors at play. The ICF framework proposes that children's functioning arises from the interaction of their fundamental linguistic abilities, the ability to use them in social situations and a variety of environmental and personal factors (Dempsey & Shakaris-Doyle, 2010). Viewing children with DLD through the lens of the ICF framework can shed light on the heterogeneity of the disorder and the functional limitations that may arise as a

result of it. Accordingly, this framework emphasises the impact DLD can have on other facets of a child's development (Washington, 2007).

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Prior to beginning this study, a thorough analysis of the pre-existing research in this area was conducted. The main databases used in this search were EBSCO Discovery Service and Dawsonera. Some of the key search terms used were 'Developmental Language Disorder', 'Specific Language Impairment', 'impact', 'development', 'behaviour', 'cognition', 'perspectives', 'long-term outcomes' and 'mental health'. The following is a summary of the most relevant research to date in this area.

#### ***1.3.1 Cognitive Difficulties in DLD***

Although the term DLD emerged as a label for the domain-specific impairment in language, some research has suggested that in fact there can be some nonverbal cognitive abilities affected also (Laasonen et al., 2018). Lukacs and Kememy (2014) discovered that children with DLD showed difficulties across both verbal and nonverbal sequential learning tasks, but not in a non-sequential probabilistic categorisation task. They concluded therefore that some, but not all nonverbal skills may be impaired for children with DLD. It also has been theorised that capacities such as general processing speed, short-term memory or working memory may be impacted (Archibald, 2017). Nicolson and Fawscett hypothesised that DLD stems from a general difficulty in acquiring automatic skills, such as procedural learning. DLD also overlaps frequently with dyslexia. This has led to the theory that both these difficulties relate to underlying problems in processing information which requires attentional control of temporal binding (Laasonen, 2002). Adults with dyslexia have been

shown to have poor nonverbal procedural learning. Similarly, difficulties in these areas of cognition has also been linked to lower language skills (Laasonen et al., 2014).

### ***1.3.2 Psychosocial Impact***

Unsurprisingly, there has been a large body of research undertaken which has highlighted that language difficulties frequently co-occur with psychosocial and emotional difficulties (Cohen, 2010). Prizant and colleagues (1990) reported that children who had communication difficulties were had a greater risk of developing learning and psychiatric disorders. Cohen and colleagues (1998) discovered that half of pre-school and school-aged children in mental health services presented with language disabilities on testing. Similarly, almost half the children seen for language difficulties go on to develop social and emotional problems (Cohen, 2001). Beichtman and Brownlie (2010) carried out a review of previous research which examined the later psychosocial outcomes for children who had language difficulties. They saw long-lasting problems in intellectual functioning, educational achievement and an increased probability of developing a psychiatric disorder. Salmon and colleagues (2016) suggested that children with language difficulties struggle to self-regulate and understand emotions, as these skills are often carried out through an internal language-based dialogue. When these difficulties are present, problem behaviours often ensue (Curtis et al., 2017). Other research by Charman and colleagues (2014) revealed that children with a language impairment had increased emotional and behavioural problems, as measured by a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire. DLD has also been shown to have a negative effect on the child's self-esteem and well-being (Laanson et al., 2018). Recent research by Lyons and Roulstone (2018) sought to explore resilience and well-being in children with DLD

through story telling. They discovered that feelings of hope, agency and having positive relationships played an important role in the development of their resilience and well-being.

Children who are considered to be shy or inhibited often present with language impairments which restricted their ability to form and maintain friendships (Evans, 1992). As they can often find it hard to enter group conversations, this can lead to social exclusion, which ultimately provides them with fewer opportunities to practice their social skills (Cohen, 2010). Language difficulties can also impact on a child's relationship with their parents or with the overall family dynamics. When children struggle to communicate effectively, this makes it increasingly difficult for parents to interpret and respond appropriately to their communication attempts (Rutter, 2003).

Language development has also been shown to directly impact emotional development (Beck, Kimschick, Eid & Klann-Deluis, 2012). Emotional competence can be described as a multi-faceted construct amalgamating a number of different skills. The ability to use and understand emotion-descriptive language is one of these key skills and has been linked to both a child's self-efficacy and their ability to be socially appropriate (Saarni, 1999). Language development and emotional development have long been thought to have a bi-directional relationship (Bosacki & Moore, 2004). Ruffman and colleagues (2003) found support for this theory by discovering that preschool children's performance in syntax was positively correlated with facial emotion recognition.

What this extensive body of research indicates is that although DLD is a 'language only-impairment by definition, these children are at a higher risk of developing emotional and mental health difficulties than their typically developing peers and a high rate of co-morbidity is apparent.

### ***1.3.3 Behavioural Impact***

There is also accumulating evidence of a relationship between behaviour and language development (Garret & Nye, 2004). Research in this area has consistently shown that language skills can significantly predict later behavioural, outcomes in children (Chow, 2018). Hollo and colleagues (2014) conducted a meta-analytic review of 22 studies with 1,171 children who had emotional and behavioural disorders. They discovered that 81% of the children had below-average language skills on formal assessment, with a further 47% falling in the severe range of difficulty. Notably, these language difficulties had never previously been highlighted for any of these children. Yew and colleagues (2013) also conducted a meta-analysis and determined that children with DLD were twice as likely to develop internalizing symptoms and externalizing problems than age-matched children with typically developing language skills. They concluded that children with DLD struggle to manage their behaviour and emotions. Research by Cohen and Lipsett (1991) showed that children who had previously had an undiagnosed language impairment were considered by their mothers to be more delinquent and considered by their teachers to have more conduct problems and show signs of psychopathology. Rice, Sell & Hadley (1991) argued that difficulties with understanding or using language can be misinterpreted by adults as being non-compliance, inattentiveness or social withdrawal. Kaler and Kopp (1990) discovered that young children who do not comply with adults' instructions often do not understand the instruction given to them. If this is not understood by adults, misconceptions about a child's behaviour, leading to a negative adult-child relationship, can develop. Therefore, a factor to be cognizant of when examining the behaviour of children with DLD is the extent to which they understand the instruction.

### ***1.3.4 Educational Impact***

The presence of language difficulties has been shown to have a significant impact on academic success and educational attainment in school (Chow & Wehby, 2018). Classroom instructions and academic teachings are all conducted through the medium of language. Children are presented with significant volumes of new vocabulary on a daily basis. Problem solving and reasoning skills, even for less language-heavy subjects such as mathematics, are all taught through language. It is unsurprising, therefore, that children with DLD are at an automatic disadvantage academically (Chow et al., 2018). Language difficulties have also been shown to correlate to reading and literacy difficulties, which puts children at a further disadvantage (Schuele, 2004). Children with SLCN often have difficulties with literacy, academic achievement and socialisation throughout their school years (Felsenfeld et al., 1994; McCormack et al., 2011). Persistent SLCN has been linked to reading difficulties (Catts, 1997), problems with literacy (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2000; Schuele, 2004), educational underachievement (Snowling et al., 2001), and behavioural difficulties (Botting and Conti-Ramsden, 2000). In addition, children with SLCN have been found to receive lower ratings of social acceptance than typically developing peers (Lindsay and Dockrell, 2002).

Conti-Ramsden and colleagues (2009) investigated the educational outcomes for adolescents who were finishing school in the United Kingdom. They discovered that forty four percent of children with DLD achieved a Level 2 qualification, equivalent to grades A-C on General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs). In comparison, however, eighty eight percent of children with typical language skills achieved this. This research indicates that adolescents with language difficulties are at risk of not performing as well as their peers in exams. In addition, the researchers found that the entrance exams to secondary school in the UK were found to be predictors of later academic achievement. They therefore proposed

that the transition to secondary school was a pivotal time for these children. However, there is a paucity of research in this area within the Irish education context.

### ***1.3.5 The Impact of Technology***

One area that is distinctly under-researched is how advancements in technology impact children with DLD. Watt (2010) conducted a review of the research with regards to the impact of technology on children's language and literacy skills generally. She found that communication through technology has led to the development of specific micro-communication behaviours (Watt, 2010, Mesch, 2009). Walther (2007) stated that when interacting through computers or phones that people naturally adapt their relational tone, sentence complexity and language usage to match their recipient. These adaptations however, require strong pragmatic skills as well as vocabulary and syntax, which can be challenging for children with DLD. Comti-Ramsden, Durkin and Simkin (2010) explored mobile phone usage among adolescents with DLD in comparison to their peers with typical language skills. They discovered that both groups used their phone to communicate a similar amount but that the teenagers with DLD sent fewer text messages and made instead made more phone calls. They also found that a greater predictor of their phone usage was not their language skills but social-emotional factors such as their shyness and the number and quality of their friendships. In general, however, research in this particular field is lacking. Much of the existing research is fast becoming outdated due simply to the pace with which technology develops.

### ***1.3.5 Long-Term Impact of DLD***

Research has shown that not only do the above-mentioned difficulties affect children with DLD, but often they persist into adolescence and adulthood. St. Clair and colleagues (2011) conducted a longitudinal study of children aged 7-16 with DLD using a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire discovered that social difficulties increased and emotional

difficulties continued into adolescence. Adults with DLD also rated themselves lower than adults with typical language skills on many dimensions of their health-related quality of life (Goodman, 1997). Research by Bryan, Freer and Furlong (2007) also highlighted the high prevalence rate of language difficulties among young offenders. They found that 66-90% of the children they studied had language skills below the average range, with 46-67% falling in the severe range. There is therefore a link between language difficulties and anti-social or criminal behaviour.

### ***1.3.6 Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives***

Previous research in this area has examined parents' and teachers' perspectives of the impact of DLD on overall development. Parents of children with speech and language needs have documented their children's difficulties in accessing education, managing their behaviour and raised concerns regarding social isolation (RCSLT, 2011). Dockrell (2000) explored teachers' perspectives of children with language difficulties. The teachers identified specific linguistic tasks that the children struggled with and also commented on their overall difficulty in keeping up with the mainstream classroom curriculum. Research by Glover, McCormack and Smith-Tamaray (2015) also explored teachers' and SLTs' perspectives of working collaboratively with each other. This collaboration unites the two fields of healthcare and education and was found by both professionals to yield the most positive outcomes for students.

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing children with DLD is the fact that language impairments are often considered to be an 'invisible disability' and frequently go undiagnosed for a long period of time (Law & Garret, 2004). This means that any other difficulties that arise, such as emotional, behavioural or social, can often be viewed in

isolation, in the absence of a crucial contributing factor. Intervention in any of these areas is less likely to be successful if one of the key underlying causes is not addressed. It is crucial, therefore, that parents, teachers and professionals have a deep understanding of the nature of DLD and its impact on other areas of child development. A holistic understanding of the disorder can ensure that children receive the intervention that they need, targeting all areas of difficulty for them. Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) work directly with children with DLD and their families and are often main professionals involved in their care. There is a lack of research however, exploring SLTs' perspectives of the impact of DLD on other aspects of a child's development. An in-depth understanding of the variety of ways in which problems associated with the disorder can manifest can lead to the development of more relevant and integrative interventions. Raising awareness of these associated difficulties among parents, teachers and healthcare professionals can lead to more accurate and timely referrals to appropriate services as well as more multi-disciplinary collaboration. Anticipating these difficulties can aid the development of appropriate early intervention programmes which may lessen their impact long-term.

This research aims to explore in-depth Speech and Language Therapists' (SLTs) perspectives of the impact of DLD on overall child development. The objective of this study is to explore SLTs' experiences of the co-occurrence of DLD with psychosocial, educational, behavioural and educational development and other previously unidentified areas affected. This research will be conducted through semi-structured interviews with SLTs who have experience of working with a minimum of four children with DLD. The data gathered from these interviews will be analysed using the thematic analysis guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

# Chapter 2: METHODOLOGY

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## 2.1 Introduction

This research aimed to investigate Speech and Language Therapists' perspectives of the impact of DLD on overall child development. This chapter will provide an overview of the methodology used to conduct this study.

## 2.2 Research Design

The overarching aim of this research was to explore and describe Speech and Language Therapists' perceptions of the impact of DLD on overall child development. The research question posed was as follows: 'what are SLTs' perspectives on the impact of DLD on overall child development? In order to explore this topic in-depth and obtain rich, descriptive data, a qualitative study design with semi-structured interviews was used.

## 2.3 Ethical Approval

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Board and Filter Board of Dublin Business School on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

## 2.4 Participants

### 2.4.1 *Participant Selection:*

Five speech and Language Therapists working in Ireland were contacted directly. These were personal connections that the researcher knew through their own experience of working as a Speech and Language Therapist. They were given participant information leaflets, outlining the objective and nature of the study, as well as informed consent forms to complete. All five therapists contacted agreed to partake in the research study. Prior to organising an interview, the therapists were asked about their experience of working with

children with DLD, to ensure that they met the inclusionary criteria. Following this, individual interviews were arranged at a time and place that was convenient for the participants.

#### **2.4.2 *Criteria for participant selection:***

The inclusionary and exclusionary criteria for participant selection were as follows:

The inclusionary criterion was that each therapist had to have experience working with a minimum of four children with DLD. The exclusionary criterion was if a therapist had experience of working with fewer than four children with DLD.

Apart from having had experience of working as a Speech and Language Therapist with a minimum of four children with DLD, no other inclusionary or exclusionary criteria were considered. This approach was taken to ensure the participants were selected without bias.

#### **2.4.3 *Sample Size***

The participants who partook in this research were 5 Speech and Language Therapists. All participants were female. All therapists had between two and fifteen years' experience. No other demographic information was gathered so as to protect the anonymity of the participants and ensure lack of bias.

### **2.5 *Procedures***

#### **2.5.1 *Data Collection Procedures***

Individual interviews with each of the five participants were conducted. Prior to beginning the interview, it was explained to the participants that they were going to discuss how children are impacted by having a diagnosis of DLD. It was explained that the interview would be recorded and later transcribed and that their participation was anonymous. Each

interview lasted between 20-60 minutes. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted, meaning that set questions were prepared in advance but other questions and prompts were asked in response to the specific answers the participants gave. This approach was adopted to ensure consistency across all interviews while also allowing some flexibility to spontaneously probe responses further (Merriam, 2009). Four questions were used to stimulate the discussion:

- 1) How do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
- 2) What day to day activities might be affected by having DLD?
- 3) What is the wider understanding of DLD?
- 4) How are children with DLD perceived?

These questions were selected because they were open-ended non-leading so as to not bias the findings. Subsequent questions were asked as appropriate to further expand on the participants' responses.

All interviews were audio-recorded on an iPhone that was password protected. The recordings were then transferred to a password protected laptop which only the researcher could access and deleted from the iPhone.

Each participant was given a code so that they audio recordings could be transcribed anonymously. The recordings were transcribed using an adapted version of the transcription conventions outlined by Ellis and Donohue (1986).

### ***2.5.2 Thematic Analysis Procedures***

In total, three hours of data was recorded and analysed. The data was described and analysed using NVivo-12 software. The analysis process followed a combination of thematic networks qualitative research tools outlined by Attride-Stirling (2001) and Braun and Clarke

(2006). Attride-Stirling based their thematic networks approach on the principles of conventional content analysis, whereby no pre-designed coding scheme is used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This follows an inductive analysis approach, in which all findings emerge from the data itself (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Thematic network analysis aims to categories the data into themes which represent heterogeneities of meaning related to the opinions expressed by participants (Dworkin, 2012). These are then grouped within a hierarchical structure.

Attride-Stirling (2001)'s thematic network provides a framework for structuring and representing these themes. To begin, the data was read repeatedly in order to become highly familiar with it. Then, using NVivo, the data was reduced down to codes, which are 'significant units of meaning' (Markham & Dean, 2006, p.195). The codes emerged from topics that arose frequently in the data. When no further new codes emerged, conceptual saturation had been reached (Saunders et al., 2017). Following this, salient themes were abstracted from the coded data. These were organised into a hierarchical thematic network, using the following levels: *Basic themes*, were devised initially by categorising the coded data. These then merged together in groups to form overarching *Organising Themes*. *Organising Themes* were then categorised into a more abstract *Global Theme*.

## **2.6 Reliability and Validity**

The results presented in this research study are exploratory and descriptive. As the participants' responses are highly subjective, generalisation of the finding should be interpreted tentatively. Lincoln & Guba (1985) advised that the reader should determine the generalisability of findings to other contexts.

# Chapter 3: RESULTS

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## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the results obtained from the thematic networks analysis of the research data. This research aimed to explore and describe Speech and Language Therapists' perspective of the impact of DLD on overall child development. This chapter will explore in depth the themes that emerged from the findings. Extracts from the data are used to support each theme. The full transcriptions of the data are available in Appendix B.

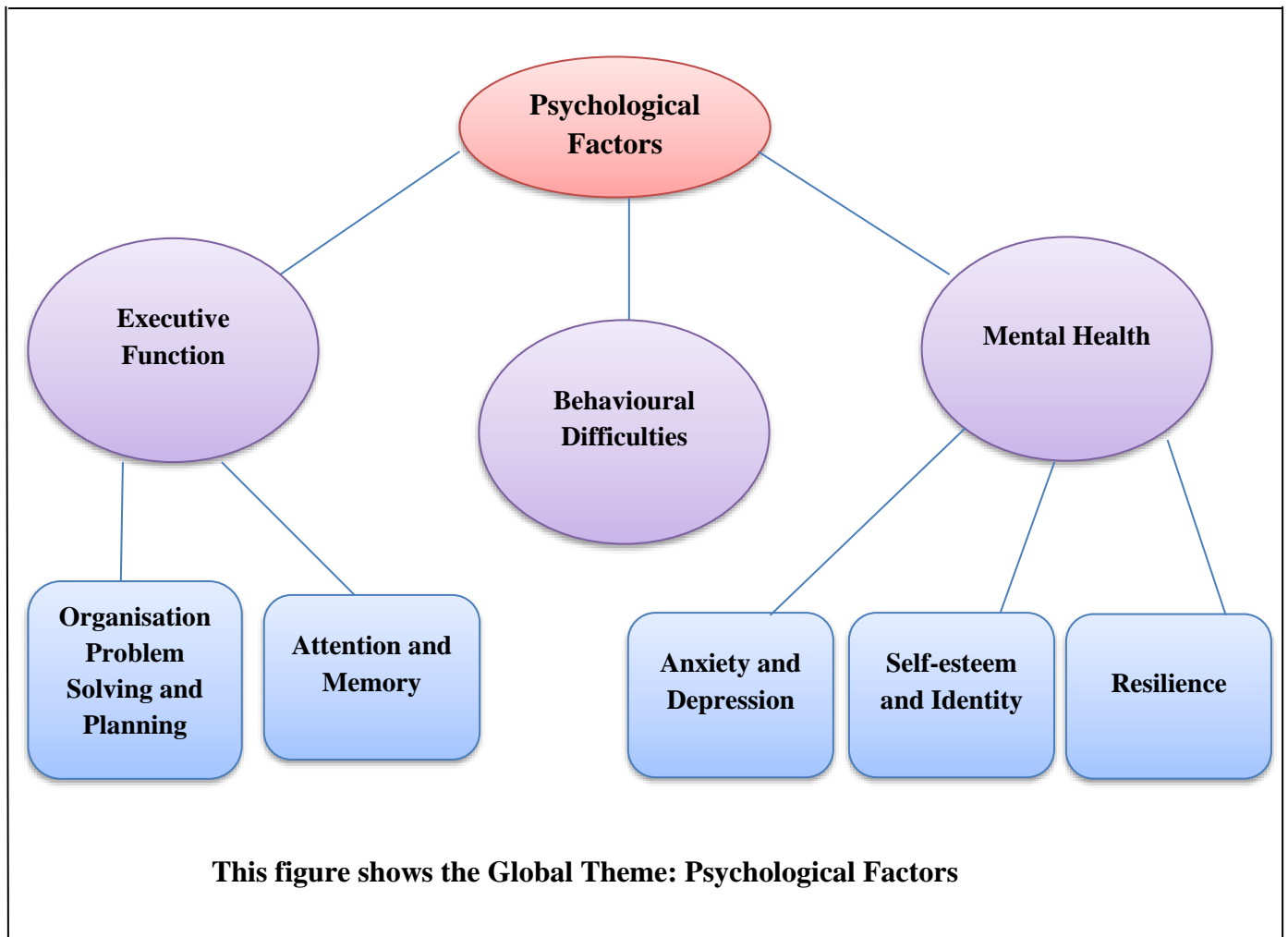
## **3.2 Analysis & Presentation of Results**

The data transcripts that were collected for this research were analysed using Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic networks analytic tool. Four over-arching global themes emerged from the data. These were supported by organising themes and basic themes. The global themes that emerged were: Psychological Factors, Social Factors, Educational Factors and Mitigating Factors.

## **3.3 Global Theme 1: Psychological Factors**

A significant global theme that emerged from the data was that there were certain Psychological factors that the SLTs felt were impacted by a child having DLD. The organising themes, Executive Function, Mental Health and Behavioural Difficulties illustrate the specific psychological components of this (See Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Global Theme: Psychological Factors**



### ***3.3.1 Organising Theme: Executive Function***

From the data, difficulties with higher order cognitive skills related to executive function were referenced frequently. These were discussed in relation to their subsequent impact on a child’s behaviour and educational attainment. This organising theme was supported by three basic themes: Organisation, Problem Solving and Planning, and Memory and Attention..

#### ***3.3.1.1 Basic Theme: Organisation, Problem Solving and Planning***

This basic theme references specific organisational, problem solving and planning skills that the participants discussed as being challenging for children with DLD. These skills were

discussed not only in relation to language-based tasks but in terms of daily activities. This theme is supported by Extracts 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

<b>Extract 3.1</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
599	P2	Oh, often there's
600		fine motor skills and organisational difficulties that we need
601		occupational therapy to help with. Difficulties with coordination can
602		often coincide with a language impairment
<b>Extract 3.2</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1723	P1	So I suppose from that
1724		point of view it can really affect a child's not only their academic
1725		performance among all the curriculum subjects but then also they're
1726		subjects that are more to do with social skills or abstract problem solving,
1727		reasoning, developing those skills, that type of thinking.
<b>Extract 3.3</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
2117	P5	Em, so I suppose trends that you tend to see with kids
2118		with DLD are just lack of organisation of themselves, and you know that
2119		might be if you give them an instruction of em okay can you get up and
2120		get your lunch, it might be that the child gets up from their desk kind of
2121		throws back their chair, maybe hits someone else if there's someone
2122		standing behind them and have no awareness that there's someone
2123		behind them, throw the chair back, run down to the back of the

2134		classroom, grab their lunchbox, might spill a few things along the way
2135		and then come back. But kind of they didn't really have a plan, they just
2136		sort of heard it and flew off, whereas if they actually stopped and thought
2137		about it then they might actually stand up in a more slower manner, push
2138		their chair in, walk to the back of the classroom, get their lunchbox,
2139		come back to their desk. And it's that kind of planning, even though that
2140		sounds a bit more like a dyspraxia, I do see it in kids with DLD, where
2141		they just don't have that logical step-by-step planning.

### 3.3.1.2 Basic Theme: Attention and Memory

Attention and memory were often cited as areas of difficulty. As a result, the need for increased repetition in order to learn new vocabulary was discussed. Difficulties in attention, in conjunction with reduced understanding were described as being a factor in children's ability to follow instructions. This theme was supported by Extracts 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.

<b>Extract 3.4</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1660	P5	I suppose it affects kids' attention and listening and you know if you
1661		can't attend, listening and attention is the basis for everything that we
1662		kind of do, well then you're going to probably miss out on a lot of I
1663		suppose information in academic settings but also maybe in your peer
1664		group
<b>Extract 3.5</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
996	P3	So I think a lot of the times we'd see kids with kind of poor attention



<b>Extract 3.11</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
206	P1	I suppose in a way if they're finding a situation difficult they're falling back on behaviours and coping strategies that they learned when they were younger and never squashed out the bad ones.
207		
208		
209		
<b>Extract 3.12</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
215	P1	I suppose they still have the history of relying on bad behaviour as a coping mechanism
216		
<b>Extract 3.13</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
196	P1	Em, so even if I go back to talking about the younger years for just a second children, it's something that we see often is that children with DLD, em if they're finding it difficult to communicate and express themselves, I suppose, they're behaviour can take a bit of a knock in that they might be described or known as an angry or a bold child because they can't communicate effectively and they might kind of lash out.
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202		

### **3.3.3 Organising Theme: Mental Health**

This organising theme depicts the mental health difficulties that the participants felt the children with DLD might have been more at risk of. Similarly, factors such as resilience were described as providing a buffer to children in challenging situations. There were three basic

themes which contributed to this organising theme: Resilience, Self-Esteem and Identity, and Anxiety and Depression.

*3.3.3.1 Basic Theme: Resilience*

Many participants made reference to the important role that resilience plays in mental health. This was described as the ability to recognise one’s strengths and have confidence in them, the ability to persevere at difficult tasks and also the ability to carry out tasks independently and not become reliant on others. This theme is supported by Extracts 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16.

<b>Extract 3.14</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
543	P2	they need a little bit of extra support
544		around their resilience and building other skills and acknowledging
545		other strengths to counteract that
<b>Extract 3.15</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1212	P4	And, but then
1213		interestingly then his brother also has severe language disorder and
1214		some moderate speech difficulties but he just seems to have more
1215		resilience generally as a person, so he’s currently one of the most
1216		popular children in the class and he’s much more willing to come to
1217		therapy and try new things in therapy and so the impact on his
1218		emotional well-being doesn’t seem to be as significant.
<b>Extract 3.16</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
2020	P5	You know that they this kind of little book in their head

2021		that they can access so they can say okay, I know I'm not so good and
2022		this and somebody is saying that I'm not so good at this but that kind
2023		of piece of work has been done that they can fall back on and say
2024		hmm, that's not really that much of a big problem to me because I
2025		know that I'm good at all these other things, grand. So that's one side
2026		resilience for me. So em, another side of resilience would be being
2027		independent which I know sounds a bit odd but if you're not
2028		independent in anything how you can you be resilient if you're
2029		dependent on everyone else to do it for you

### 3.3.3.2 Basic Theme: *Self-esteem and Identity*

The basic theme describes the problems that can arise with regards to children's self-esteem, confidence in themselves and sense of identity. This was an area that was found to be negatively impacted often, particularly when children were aware of their difficulties and felt different to others. Similarly, having good self-esteem and confidence was found to be beneficial for children. This theme is depicted in Extracts 3.17, 3.18 and 3.19.

<b>Extract 3.17</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
842	P3	Em, self-esteem, I suppose, their self-confidence. Like, no kid wants to
843		be the child who doesn't have any friends. So I think that can have a
844		massive knock-on effect on their self-esteem and confidence and just
845		their own kind of sense of self. Especially because you're, I suppose,
846		children can be really conscious and you're, that really forms part of
847		your identity when you're younger, your peer group and who you're

848		friends are.
<b>Extract 3.18</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1110	P3	Yeah I think as we were saying about the kind of self-esteem, self-worth, she doesn't think I'm able to do this so why should I even bother trying, that attitude can be really harmful and really difficult to deal with.
1111		
1112		
1113		
<b>Extract 3.19</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1191	P4	He's very reluctant to
1192		go to resource, he's very reluctant to come to therapy as he feels it
1193		differentiates him. Em... doesn't like to identify himself as being
1194		different and em, his language disorder seems to have profoundly
1195		impacted on how he sees himself as a person.

### 3.3.3.3 Basic Theme: Anxiety and Depression

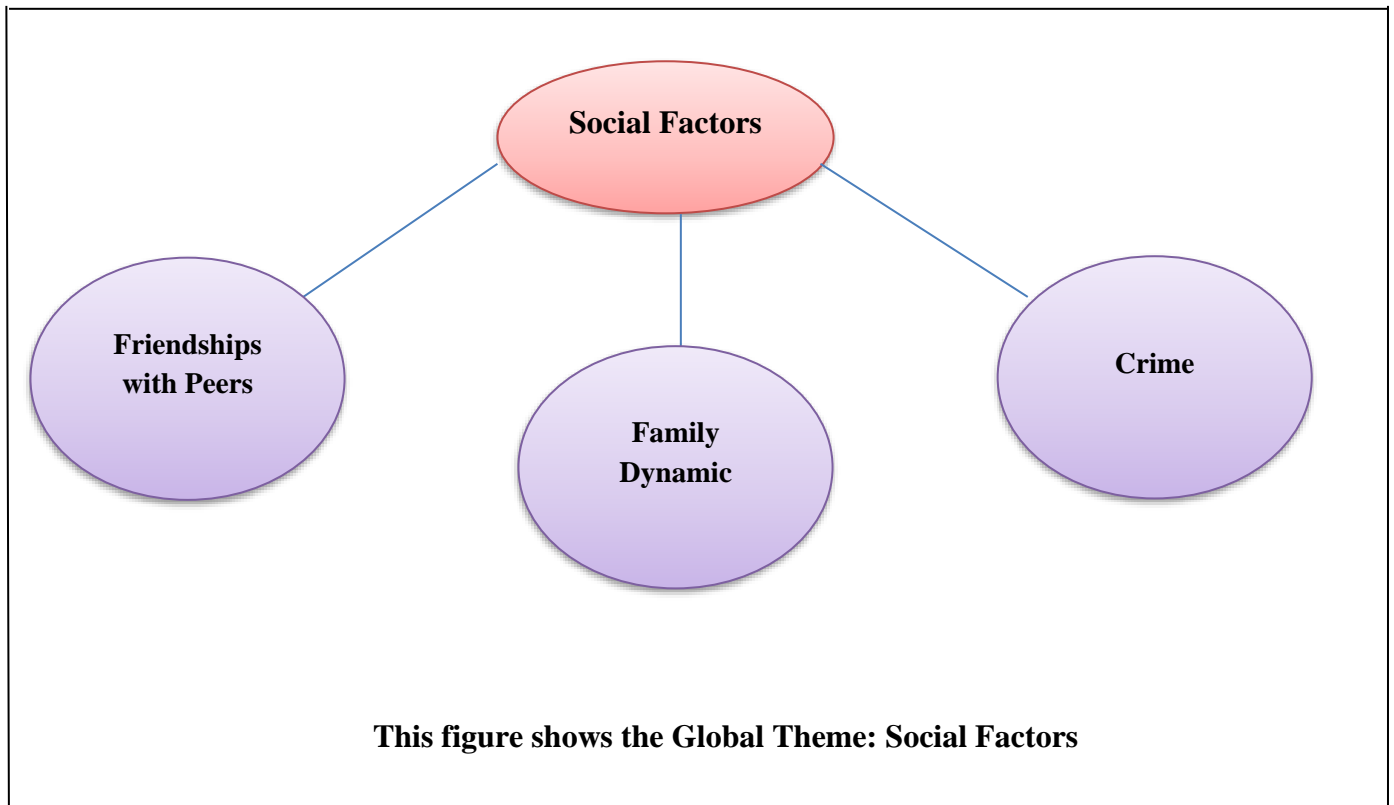
The risk of developing mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression was also discussed by participants. They noticed that some children can present as being very anxious and with low mood. These difficulties were found to be more prevalent amongst older children and teenagers, sometimes leading to self-harm and suicidal ideation. Additionally, some participants made reference to children attending mental health services. This theme is evidenced in Extracts 3.20, 3.21 and 3.22.

<b>Extract 3.20</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
142	P1	But confidence and anxiety would
143		definitely be areas I would see direct implications in and a lot of em
144		research em out there at the minute, I suppose, is showing a strong
145		correlation between DLD and significant communication impairments
146		in younger years, leading to higher rates of anxiety and depression
147		from adolescent years onwards
<b>Extract 3.21</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1251	P4	I think it's very variable, em, the way that it seems to present with him
1252		is more almost not a depression, but like a sadness, definitely a
1253		sadness. And em, I have seen another of cases, em, particularly where
1254		DLD is picked up quite late, em, and sometimes those cases are
1255		coming to me after they've first presented with self-harming or suicidal
1256		ideation that they go to CAMHS and CAMHS are actually the first
1257		service to discover where you know, that there's other things going on.
<b>Extract 3.22</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
152	P1	Em, again it can vary so much but I suppose a child might be less, I
153		suppose if they're lacking in confidence and they're anxious about
154		every communication exchange that happens, every interaction, it
155		would be linked with their awareness as well, the more aware they are
156		of it, of their difficulties they'd be more likely to have lower
157		confidence or to have higher anxiety levels

### 3.4 Global Theme 2: Social Factors

This global theme explores the various social factors that can be impacted by a child having DLD. This global theme was comprised of the following organising themes: Friendships with Peers, Family Dynamic and Crime (See Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 Global Theme: Social Factors**



#### 3.4.1 Organising Theme: Friendships with Peers

A child's ability to make and maintain friendships with their peers can sometimes be negatively impacted by having DLD. A myriad of factors were discussed in relation to this. Difficulties with joining in conversations and initiating interactions were evident. Children also sometimes engage in conversations with peers on merely a superficial level. As a result, some participants mentioned children gravitating towards younger children or children for whom English is a second language. Extracts 3.23, 3.24 and 3.25 support this theme.

**Extract 3.23**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
62	P1	Em... Well one thing that comes to mind as an aspect of school that
63		would impact them would be I suppose the mixing with their peers.
64		Again, something that we all at some level took for granted in school
65		that you're in the same classroom of people for eight to fourteen years
66		and you make friends, it's just a normal part of it, whereas for them not
67		having the communication skills to just be able to jump in and talk
68		about maybe what's happening or ask how to play a particular game or
69		even to understand the rules if they were included.

**Extract 3.24**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
522	P2	often you'll find that a child with a
523		language disorder has a good bond with somebody that is a year or two
524		below them because their language is on a par and they can engage in
525		the right way. So if you have a pairing like that I think the interaction
526		will go well but maybe with somebody of their own age it wouldn't

**Extract 3.25**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1853	P5	I suppose what that
1854		means is that in a social situation they may not pick up on a certain cue
1855		that someone is annoyed with them until maybe it's too late. Em I
1856		suppose they might misinterpret something that someone has done to
1857		them, say in the yard someone might bump into them by accident but
1858		they might think they've done it on purpose and that can end up in a bit

1859		of a kerfuffle or challenging situation for the child
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### 3.4.2 Organising Theme: Family Dynamics

This organising theme outlines the ways in which the family dynamic and the relationship between the parent and the child can be influenced by a child having DLD. This was discussed in terms of parents feeling stressed and frustrated at not being able to communicate with their child, the parent not fully understanding what DLD involved and how to help their children and how a negative interaction cycle can develop. This theme is shown in the Extracts 3.26, 3.27 and 3.28.

<b>Extract 3.26</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1669	P5	And I suppose as well depending on how a child's parent understands
1670		their diagnosis and what the impact of DLD actually is for their child in
1671		their kind of environmental circle it can sometimes lead to quite a
1672		negative parent-child interaction or frustrated parent-child interaction or
1673		actually a very dependent parent-child interaction where, you know, a
1674		child isn't being given the chance to be independent because they have
1675		this diagnosis of DLD
<b>Extract 3.27</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
11	P1	Em it can have an impact on the relationship between the parent and
12		the child if the parent is getting increasingly frustrated if they might be
13		asking a child to say, or sorry to do something or say to go get
14		something for them but if the child doesn't understand the instruction

15		the parent might just think they're not getting it and so there might be
16		elevated levels of stress

**Extract 3.28**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1799	P5	maybe where both parties are frustrated because maybe behind the
1800		parents' frustration you have maybe not understanding fully what's going
1801		on for their child, worry anxiety, you know emotions and then a very
1802		busy lifestyle or different demands on their everyday life and that's kind
1803		of where the parent is coming from.

**3.4.3 Organising Theme: Crime**

When discussing the long-term implications of having DLD, one topic that was discussed frequently was the prevalence of language difficulties among young offenders and the prison population and how having a diagnosis of DLD might put a child at a greater risk of becoming involved in crime. The participants discussed their opinions on why this link might exist and mentioned socio-economic status, leaving school early and vulnerability to coercion as factors that might contribute to this. This theme is depicted in Extracts 3.29, 3.30 and 3.31

**Extract 3.29**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
687	P2	Yeah there's one that just popped into my head, em quite a lot of the
688		prison population have language difficulties so em, there is a
689		relationship between having language disorder and your likelihood to
690		go on to I suppose, to be involved in crime. So em, I'm not sure that

691		that's understood, I think there's a little bit of awareness around it but
692		certainly it's not something that we would deal with in the nought to
693		eighteen group but I think it's worthwhile being aware that it can lead
694		to difficulties and involvement in crime.

**Extract 3.30**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1397	P4	obviously then there is a lot of
1398		research which talks about the impact on employability and the number
1399		of people with language difficulties who are in the prison service and
1400		yeah, it's very sad when you think about it... Particularly when, these
1401		are people who have lots of capabilities and lots of strengths and in a
1402		way it's because our system is so biased towards teaching in such a
1403		language way and assessment in such a language-based way and that's
1404		why their abilities can't be shown

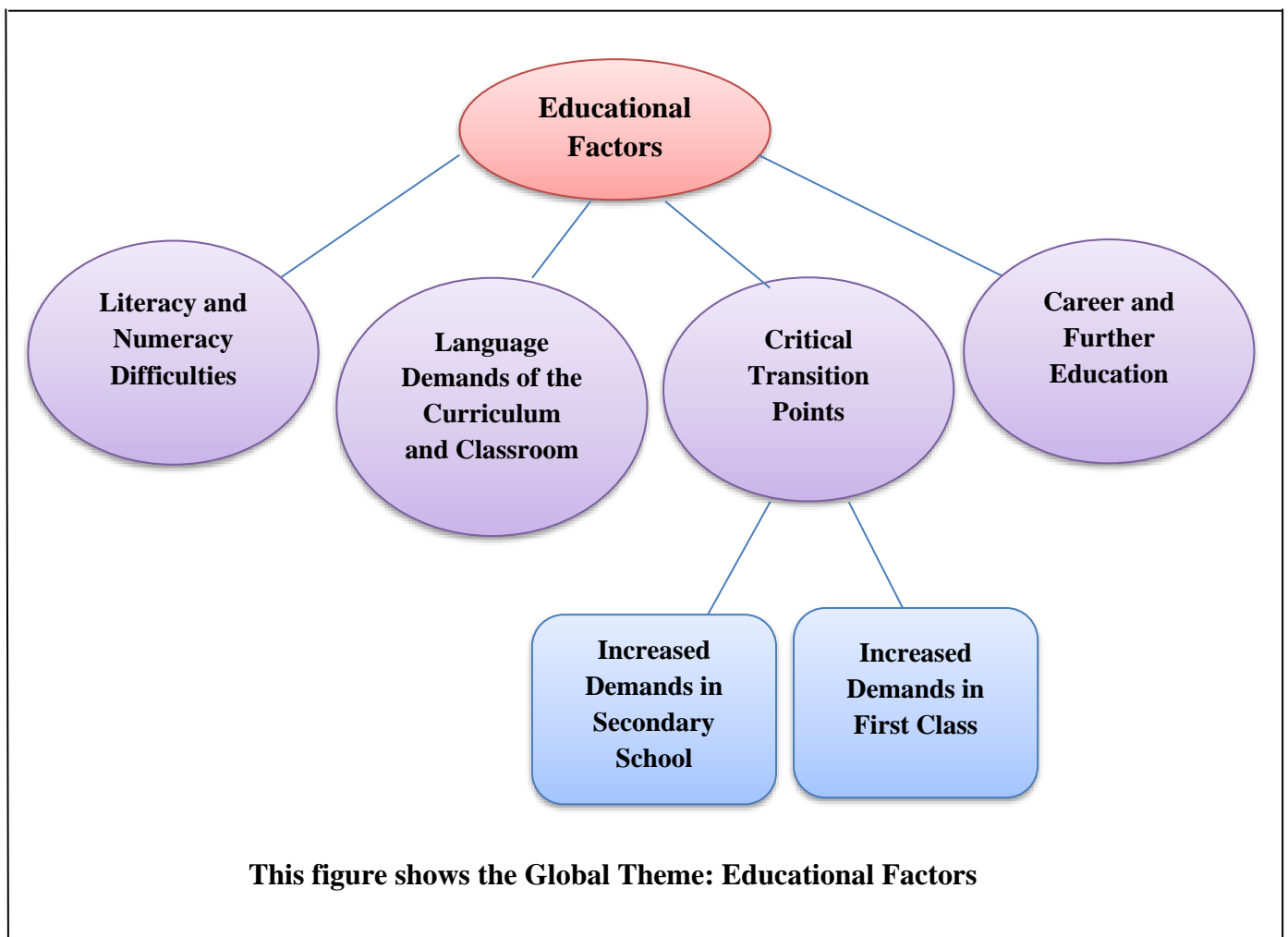
**Extract 3.31**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1072	P3	And it's like now that we see
1073		SLTs working in the prison system is a big developing area and there's
1074		a huge amount of young offenders who have language difficulties and
1075		that's like, I don't think that's coincidental

### 3.5 Global Theme: Educational Factors

This global theme details all the ways in which DLD can impact a child’s education or ability to engage with the curriculum. This was a major area of discussion within each interview as the entire curriculum is delivered through the medium of language. There were four organising themes that contributed to this global theme: Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties, Language Demands of the Curriculum and Classroom, Career and Further Education, and Classroom and Critical Transition Points (See Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3 Global Theme: Psychological Factors**



### 3.5.1 *Organising Theme: Literacy and Numeracy Difficulties*

The impact that DLD can have on a child’s numeracy and literacy attainments emerged as a theme in the data. As well as having a high co-morbidity with dyslexia, DLD was discussed in terms of having a knock-on effect on literacy due to the language demands of this. Similarly, the language used to explain and understand mathematical concepts was found to make it more difficult for a child to keep up in Maths. This theme is shown in Extracts 3.32 and 3.33.

<b>Extract 3.32</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
2466	P5	Em, literacy difficulties, or numeracy difficulties
2467		like dyslexia, dyscalculia they can co-occur with DLD so I suppose
2468		that would impact all your other areas of development but I think
2469		hopefully from what I’ve said hopefully that covers all the areas that I
2470		can think of at the moment anyway
<b>Extract 3.33</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
594	P2	They’d often have
595		associated difficulties with literacy, so often you might have a child
596		with DLD and dyslexia which can both impact each other and make it
597		even more difficult to learn through school

### 3.5.2 *Organising Theme: Language Demands of the Curriculum and Classroom*

The extensive language demands that exist both within the school curriculum and also within the classroom environment generally were brought up frequently. The participants

discussed how teaching is delivered through the medium of language and how as the children get older the vocabulary demands increase exponentially. Each subject requires an extensive vocabulary which can be challenging for children with DLD. Additionally, understanding basic classroom instructions that the teacher is giving can be hard as well. Extracts 3.34, 3.35 and 3.36 depict this.

<b>Extract 3.34</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1034	P3	So I think in secondary school, there's not, because the whole curriculum is kind of language loaded and even now with the new Project Maths that's so language heavy
1035		
1036		
<b>Extract 3.35</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1238	P4	The older child
1239		is, I think he's two or three classes behind in Maths. Em and that's
1240		basically because of the amount of language that's involved in the
1241		curriculum, it's not... That the resource teacher would say that when
1242		it's broken down into... Like presented visually or broken down into
1243		language that's at the level that they're at they demonstrate the
1244		cognitive ability to do it. But the amount of support they need to access
1245		that, they can't access it at the same pace as the rest of the children in
1246		the class
<b>Extract 3.36</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1690	P1	I suppose the kind of

1691		understanding side of language really comes into all the other subjects
1692		that are on the curriculum, em, so science, geography, maths especially
1693		language in the maths subject or even the concept of numbers, adding,
1694		taking away, even though they're not language-based concepts because
1695		they're concepts and they involve understanding that can really affect a
1696		child's I suppose numeracy attainments.

### 3.5.3 *Organising Theme: Career and Further Education*

An issue that arose frequently in regards to education is what happens to older children with DLD once they leave school. The participants discussed how it can be a worry for parents to consider whether their child will be able to get a third level education or what kind of employment opportunities await them. Some participants felt however that with the right support there was no reason they should not be able to access education or employment that plays on their strengths. This theme was supported by Extracts 3.37, 3.38 and 3.39.

<b>Extract 3.37</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
555	P2	It can impact on your
556		ability to achieve your career that you're looking for so because of
557		your difficulties with the learning you might not achieve the points that
558		you want to go and do whatever academic career it is that you want to
559		do. And it can mean that you might have to change your goals in terms
560		of a career to something that's more related to your strengths and less
561		language-based so that reduces the freedom they have to achieve the
562		way they would like to.

<b>Extract 3.38</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1388	P4	But he has, because he's
1389		chosen to do that he's limited in what he can apply for and his mum is
1390		already worried about his employment prospects and what's that going
1391		to mean for him going forward and then if he ends up not being able to
1392		get a job or being successful in training for something that he's
1393		actually interested in and what impact that's going to have on his self-
1394		esteem and his mental health and em...
<b>Extract 3.39</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1049	P3	So that then has an impact on like
1050		what you do in college, if you choose to go to college, because I think
1051		that's not something that's maybe an option to people with DLD,
1052		whether it's because they weren't able to do the sufficient subjects
1053		maybe to get into a college course or to get into a university.

#### **3.5.4 Organising Theme: Critical Transition Points**

During the interviews the participants noted two critical transition points within the education system where the demands on children increase significantly. These were discussed in terms of being two timeframes where difficulties that were previously masked or managed well can become apparent. Two key points emerged which are represented by two basic themes: Increased Demands in First Class and Increased Demands in Secondary School.

### 3.5.4.1 Basic Theme: Increased Demands in First Class

Some of the participants felt that in first class the demands of the school curriculum begin to increase and there can be a marked change in a child's ability to keep up at this point. This was also discussed in terms of an increase in social demands with peers where play styles begin to change. This theme is supported by Extracts 3.40 and 3.41.

<b>Extracts 3.40</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1785	P5	Yeah, em, so... I suppose when children are in preschool you know
1786		obviously it's very play-based and then they make the move to primary
1787		school where in junior and senior infants you have the Aiste
1788		curriculum where again is quite play-based and is quite child-friendly
1789		in that manner but em once you kind of hit first class there is a big
1790		jump with what kids are expected to be able to do from a literacy point
1791		of view, a numeracy point of view and a language function point of
1792		view.
<b>Extract 4.41</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
507	P2	Not that I can think of but it would certainly be for children from seven
508		plus when they start to have to take on roles when they're playing
509		imaginatively or to understand rules when they're playing in the
510		playground they would find it very difficult.

### 3.5.4.2 Basic Theme: Increased Demands in Secondary School

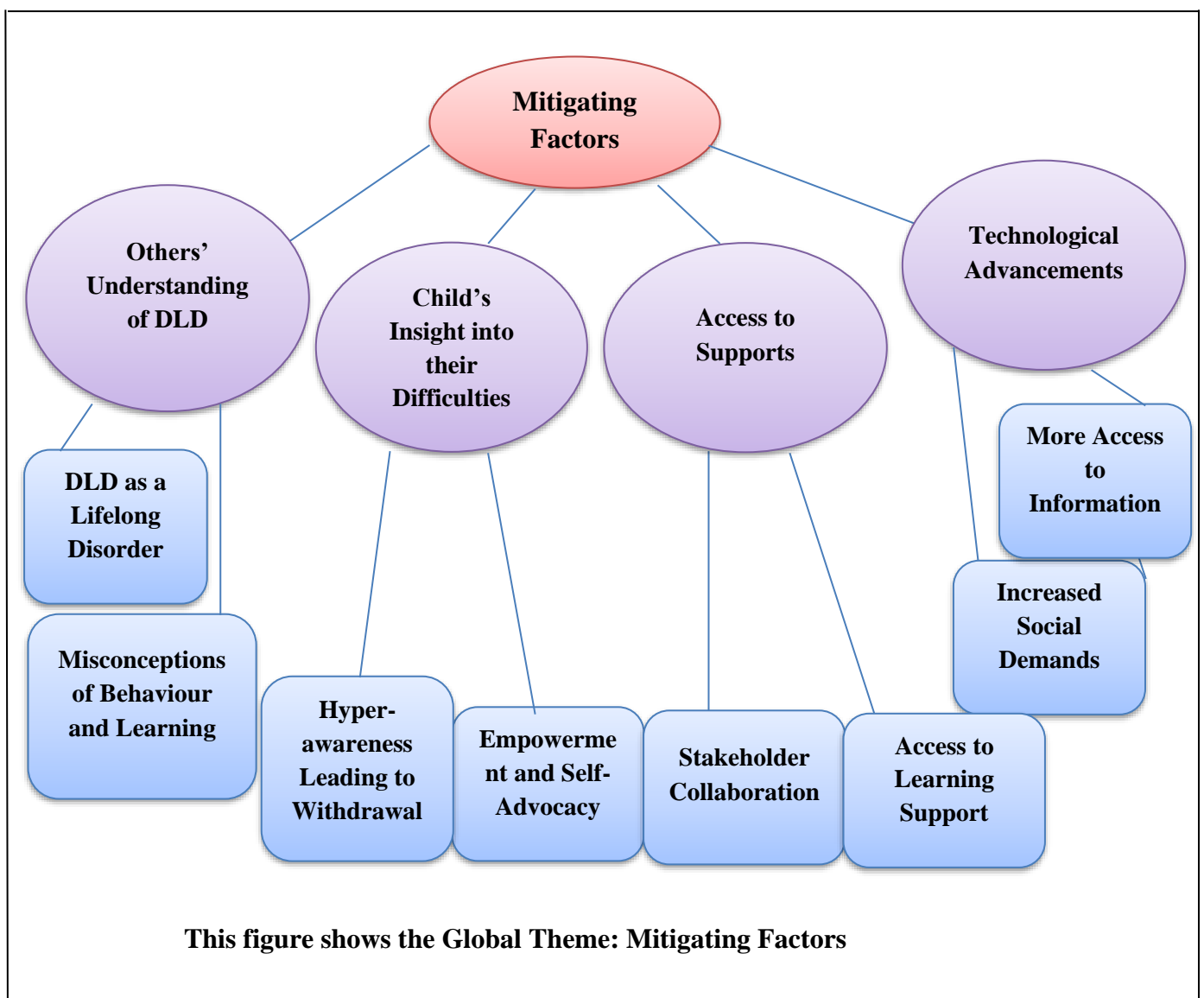
Another critical transition point that emerged from the data was when children transitioned from primary school to secondary school. This transition means a change of teachers, an increase in the number of subjects a child does and expectations of being able to work independently. This can present as being a very challenging time for children with DLD. This theme is supported by Extracts 3.42 and 3.43.

<b>Extract 3.42</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1805	P5	Em, I suppose in the primary school setting obviously the subjects get more advanced in terms of maths and the view is to prepare a child for secondary school where a child is expected to be much more independent within that school setting.
1806		
1807		
1808		
<b>Extract 3.43</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1361	P4	so with the younger child the gap between him and his peers might be one class academically but for his brother, who's in sixth class, it's two or three classes and by the time they're in secondary school where the language that they need to access like history or like definitely English, but like nearly all subjects, that's just so difficult for them.
1362		
1363		
1364		
1365		
1366		

### 3.6 Global Theme: Mitigating Factors

This global theme represents the myriad of factors that emerged from the data that were shown to influence how a child might be affected by DLD. The presence or absence of these factors was discussed as being pivotal in altering the outcome for these children. This global theme contains four organising themes: Others' Understanding of DLD, Child's Insight into their Difficulties, Technological Advancements and Access to Supports (See Figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4 Global Theme: Mitigating Factors**



### 3.6.1 Organising Theme: Others' Understanding of DLD

Throughout the data, many references were made to the fact that DLD is not very well-known among the general public and not very well understood. The level of understanding that the key people in a child's life has of DLD was shown to either provide a very supportive environment or lead to misconceptions about the child. Two basic themes supported this: *Misconceptions of Behaviour and Learning*, and *DLD as a Lifelong Disorder*.

#### 3.6.1.1 Basic Theme: *Misconceptions of Behaviour and Learning*

The participants felt that the lack of awareness and understanding of DLD meant that children's language difficulties could often be misinterpreted as bad behaviour, not trying hard enough in school or lack of intelligence. This was discussed as being a problem with both parents and teachers who maybe do not have a good understanding of the child's level of language ability and how this might affect them in their daily life. This theme is supported by Extracts 3.44, 3.45 and 3.46.

<b>Extract 3.44</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1100	P3	Em, I think a lot of times people just think they're academically, that
1101		they're just, they don't have the same learning ability or cognitive
1102		ability as their peers. I think people think that maybe they don't try
1103		hard enough in school or that they're bold. I think, and maybe an
1104		overlap of all those things, em yeah so and I think that can be their
1105		teachers and their peers and even maybe parents can have those
1106		misconceptions

<b>Extract 3.45</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
2367	P5	I think from a child's
2368		perspective interacting with an adult who doesn't understand their
2369		difficulties they're kind of stereotypically labelled, you know you hear
2370		of the bold child, or the child that doesn't understand or is not able to
2371		keep up with their peers and you know, won't achieve as much as
2372		everyone else, those sort of negative labels that typically in the past
2373		might have been used around kids who maybe find language hard.
<b>Extract 3.46</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
282	P1	Em, I think they'd be perceived and can be perceived as I suppose bold
283		in younger years if the behaviour, the bad behaviour continues to
284		manifest. Em, they might come across as being not very intelligent,
285		even though a lot of the time with DLD, especially when it still had the
286		old term of SSLI, the child had to have average IQ or average
287		cognitive abilities.

#### *3.6.4.2 Basic Theme: DLD as a Lifelong Disorder*

A key finding that emerged was that, as result of a general reduced understanding of DLD, oftentimes it was expected that a child would grow out of their language difficulties. Both parents and teachers sometimes lacked the understanding that DLD is a lifelong disorder and this misunderstanding can alter the expectations put on children. Extracts 3.47 and 3.48 highlight this theme.

**Extract 3.47**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
250	P1	people will
251		say oh I went to speech therapy when I was younger or I know
252		someone who went and they're fine now, there's always nearly that
253		expectation that they'll be fine, or they just need it for a short while
254		and then they don't need it anymore which is obviously best case
255		scenario for us. Em, but for DLD I don't think there that understanding
256		there that it is a lifelong condition, the areas in which it can affect a
257		child and what supports they actually need, whether that's clinic,
258		school, the classroom, resource, at home or with extended family
259		members. I don't think people have a great understanding of it

**Extract 3.48**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
968	P3	I think the thing that really kind of
969		evades people is that it's a lifelong impairment. So that this person will
970		like for their lives struggle with language, that that's always going to
971		be difficult.

**3.6.2 Organising Theme: Child's Insight into their Difficulties**

One significant factor that the participants felt impacted their outcome was their level of insight and awareness into their difficulties. This was discussed in terms of its development over time as a child got older and how their awareness could be both positive and negative

for a child. This is described by the two basic themes: Hyperawareness Leading to Withdrawal and Empowerment and Self-Advocacy.

*3.6.2.1 Basic Theme: Hyperawareness Leading to Withdrawal*

A child’s awareness of their difficulties was found to sometimes have a negative impact on them. The participants had found that children who very aware of their difficulties would sometimes withdraw from participating in activities and become anxious about tasks that were hard for them. This can be seen in Extracts 3.49, 3.50 and 3.51.

<b>Extract 3.49</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
864	P3	But I
865		think a lot of the time children with DLD are like very aware of their
866		difficulties and that can have a big impact then because they’re
867		reluctant to participate in things because em, cos they know they’re
868		just not going to be able to, you know, I suppose they’re not going to
869		be able to either understand what’s happening or they’re not going to
870		be able to talk about what’s happening. And I think then like they
871		become kind of shy and withdrawn.
<b>Extract 3.50</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
2178	P5	I suppose is of the child who is very much aware of their
2179		DLD, and that mixed in maybe with their natural personality they just
2180		don’t have any coping strategies to regulate their emotions and so
2182		underneath it all because they’re so aware that they find things hard
2183		they might be quite anxious, low confidence, upset, frustrated, angry

2184		and that can manifest as poor behaviour across a lot of different
2184		settings.
<b>Extract 3.51</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1635	P5	I think sometimes
1636		children can have a very good insight into the fact that they're
1636		different from their peers, to the fact that they're finding it really
1637		really hard in school and then that kind of off sets a whole other area
1638		of difficulties for them, so that in turn can lead to difficulties in
1639		emotional regulation, for instance.

### 3.6.2.2 Basic Theme: Empowerment and Self-Advocacy

In contrast to the negative effects of hyperawareness, the participants referenced ways in which insight and understanding into their difficulties can be empowering for a child. It can provide them with the ability to explain to parents and teachers what help they need and what is easy and difficult for them. This basic theme is supported by Extracts 3.52 and 3.53.

<b>Extract 3.52</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
894	P3	And I think maybe if a child is aware of
895		their difficulties it can be really motivating, like an older child I'm
896		thinking of now. She has DLD and she actually wants to go on and to
897		become like a learning support teacher because she feels like that
898		would have made a really big difference to her in national school if
899		she'd had that support so she has really good insight. And as well

900		because she's in secondary school she's able to kind of, like she's
901		able to sit down and tell her teachers what she finds difficult and what
902		would make her life a bit easier. So I think it can be good in that
903		sense because children can be motivated to work on these skills and
904		can actually...
<b>Extract 3.53</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1124	P3	and she was
1125		like I don't understand what you're asking me to do so her parents, and
1126		she was able to say that to her teachers and her parents. So she was
1127		kind of able to advocate for herself and then because of that he parents
1128		were able to advocate on her behalf and they kept pushing,

### 3.6.3 Organising Theme: Technological Advancements

A key factor that is newly emerging for children with DLD at present is the ever-evolving advancements in technology. This again was a factor that could be seen to place greater demands on children to interact on regular basis through language, which can be challenging for them. On the contrary it was found to provide a means for children to access more information and connect with other people with similar difficulties. This was made up of two basic themes: Increased Social Demands and More Access to Information.

#### 3.6.3.1 Basic Theme: Increased Social Demands

The participants felt that the advancements in technology and the way these are used to socialise nowadays has a profound impact on children and could put more demands on them to socialise. This theme is supported by Extract 3.54 and 3.55.

<b>Extract 3.54</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1510	P4	And
1511		like particularly when you think of, like, how much kids socialise now
1512		using phones and stuff, like that's, you can... It's quite obvious when a
1513		child has language difficulties and they're trying to, like, write a
1514		message, and it's so apparent in the message that between their
1515		spelling and their grammar, and then they're not even fact to face so
1516		it's really difficult for the message to just literally get lost in
1517		translation. So yeah I just think, and between just going to the shop and
1518		asking for things and making sure that, being able to actually ask a
1519		question or even basic things like that, like I just think it really affects
1520		pretty much every aspect of their life.
<b>Extract 3.55</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
511	P2	For older children it
512		would be things like social media and not being able to make sense of
51		the texts and the Whatsapps and whatever else is going on

### 3.6.3.2 Basic Theme: More Access to Information

In contrast to this, the advancements in technology were thought to also have some positive effects for children with DLD. In particular, the ability to find out more information about DLD and see videos of other children with similar difficulties was thought to be beneficial to them. This is shown in Extract 3.56.

**Extract 3.56**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1526	P4	Well I think in some ways it's positive, like if they're able to access
1527		em like there's some nice resources and YouTube videos so they can
1528		see other people in similar positions and maybe, depending on the
1529		child they might actually use technology as a tool to actually connect
1530		with others and feel less isolated and to get some actual real
1531		information about it, as opposed to ideas they might just have their
1532		head, ideas not based off anything

**3.6.4 Organising Theme: Access to Supports**

A significant mitigating factor that was discussed frequently was the access children had to supports. This took many forms, both learning support in school and developing specific language strategies within speech and language therapy. The participants discussed how the level of support a child received could greater alter their outcome. This was shown in two different basic themes: Stakeholder Collaboration and Learning Support.

**3.6.4.1 Basic Theme: Stakeholder Collaboration**

This theme describes the importance of collaborative support from all stakeholders in the child's life. This means parents, teachers and SLTs collaborating together to provide the best support to the child. The participants felt that this collaboration would provide the most facilitative environment for a child to succeed in. Extracts 3.57 and 3.58 describe this.

<b>Extract 3.57</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
672	P2	And then combing that with
673		the parents or the school or whoever else is involved in the child's
674		care, trying to get that impact on em, or trying to get them to be able
675		to continue with that approach with the children to be able to put in
676		place all those supports throughout their day, throughout the school
677		year or throughout the time that they're trying to learn and that can be
678		really really useful having everybody working together.
<b>Extract 3.58</b>		
<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1152	P2	So I think
1153		they do need the support of like obviously their family, parents,
1154		teacher, resource teacher, the SLT, the Educational Psychologist and
1155		then obviously then the child themselves at the centre of all the
1156		decision-making

#### *3.6.4.2 Basic Theme: Access to Learning Support*

Another type of support that was found to be paramount to a child's outcome was their access to learning support in school. This in particular would assist them in accessing the curriculum and keeping up with their subjects at school. This is depicted in Extracts 3.62 and 3.63

**Extract 3.59**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1187	P4	And em he has day to day
1188		difficulties in terms of accessing what's going on in the classroom. Em
1189		he is getting, he's acutally quite fortunate in that he's getting resource
119		everyday

**Extract 3.60**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1233	P4	And they're
1234		doing very well, they're getting a lot of support in school

# Chapter Four: DISCUSSION

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## 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore in-depth SLTs' perspectives on the impact of DLD on overall child development. The key findings that emerged were that there were three main elements of a child's life that were affected by DLD: educational factors, social factors and psychological factors. In addition to this, there were mitigating factors that appeared to either positively or negatively influence a child's outcome overall. This chapter will discuss and interpret the major findings of the study. Their significance will be discussed in the context of the pre-existing research and literature in this area. This chapter will critically examine the strengths and limitations of the research conducted the real-life implications of the findings and the recommended areas of further research.

## 4.2 Discussion of the Findings

The main findings from this study are summarised within the four global themes. The findings indicated that social, educational and psychological factors of a child's development can be impacted by having a diagnosis of DLD. The findings also suggested that certain mitigating factors exist which can increase or decrease the extent to which a child is affected by their language difficulties.

### 5.2.1 *Psychological Factors*

A key finding of this study was the many aspect of a child's psychological development that the SLTs noted can be affected by DLD. The prominence of mental health related comments during the interviews was unsurprising, as this is an area that has been heavily researched. The children were described as presenting with anxiety and low mood. Some participants noted that children they had seen attended mental health services for self-harm

and suicidal ideation. These descriptions fit with previous research which found that children with language difficulties were at higher risk of developing psychiatric difficulties (Cohen, 2001, Prizant et al., 1990, Becichtman & Brownlie, 2010). Self-esteem and identity also emerged as areas in which a child with DLD might struggle, which supports Laanson and colleague's (2018) study which found these children have reduced self-esteem and well-being. An interesting finding in the data was that resilience was often mentioned as a key factor which prevented a child from developing mental health difficulties or low self-esteem. One participant made reference to two brothers who both presented with DLD. She described their juxta-positioned personalities, with one being very happy and outgoing and the other more withdrawn and anxious. She described the more outgoing child as being more resilient and attributed his happy demeanour to his resilience.

This finding points towards a clear need to instil confidence and resilience in children from a young age. Building awareness of a child's strengths and talents might help protect them from potentially developing mental health difficulties. This could be incorporated as part of whole-classroom learning or individualised SLT intervention. The findings also point towards a need for teachers and SLTs working with these children to work collaborate with Psychologists.

The presence of behavioural difficulties in these children was also discussed in the interviews. Many SLTs had experience of children who were displaying challenging behaviours, such as hitting, kicking and pushing. They expressed that these can sometimes stem from frustration from their difficulties or can be an attempt to communicate. Hollo and colleagues (2014) had also found a significant correlation between children with emotional and behavioural disorders and language difficulties. Previous research has found a relationship between emotional competence and language skills (Beck, Kimschick, Eid &

Klann-Deluis, 2012). This finding would therefore suggest the need to specifically target vocabulary for emotions for young children and teach them emotional regulation skills.

One of the organising themes within the Psychological Factors was Executive Function and how children with DLD can present with some difficulties in this domain. This area was once thought of as being unaffected by language difficulties, as it is a collection of non-verbal cognitive skills (Lukacs & Kemeny, 2014). However the participants cited memory, attention, organisation, processing and problem solving as being areas of difficulty for these children. This finding adds further weight to the recent research in this area which has suggested that in fact some nonverbal skills such as processing speed and working memory can be reduced in this population (Archibold, 2017). This finding suggests the need for collaboration between SLTs and Psychologists. A more in-depth understanding of a child's executive function skills can allow SLTs to tailor their therapy interventions to maximize their effectiveness.

### ***5.2.2 Educational Factors***

The impact of DLD on education emerged consistently within the data. Notably, the participants discussed the considerable language demands on the children, in terms of their academic subjects. Even subjects such as Maths, which relies more on non-verbal reasoning, become increasingly difficult for children to keep up with due to the addition complex vocabulary to explain mathematical concepts. This finding is consistent with Chow and colleagues' (2018) research, which concluded that children with DLD are inherently disadvantaged in the classroom due to their language difficulties. Literacy was also mentioned as being an area in which children with DLD can fall behind, which echoes Schuele's (2004) findings. The future prospects for these children, in terms of employment and further education, were found to be a concern that was raised often by parents. As Conti-

Ramsden and colleagues (2009) discovered, approximately half as many children with DLD reach the level of education as children with typical language skills. The participants in this study spoke about Irish-specific educational factors, such as the decision to complete the Leaving Certificate Applied instead of the Leaving Certificate, however no research in this area exists at present.

Two main critical transition points were mentioned often by the participants, one in first class and one at first year of secondary school. These critical points were a crucial finding that in fact link to all other findings. These were times when a huge increase in the social and educational demands placed on children was seen. As a result, their difficulties may become more apparent at this stage . Conti-Ramsden and colleagues (2009) recognised the significance of the transition to secondary school for children with DLD, albeit within the UK education system. However the increase in demands in first class of primary school came up consistently. This may in fact be a critical time period that is as of yet underexplored.

### **5.2.3 Social Factors**

The findings of the study suggested that SLTs found that many aspects of a child's social development were affected by having DLD. One key area within this domain was friendships with peers. Similar to the findings of Cohen (2010), the SLTs had observed the children having difficulty joining in on conversations and being isolated for others. As well, the impact that DLD can have on a parent-child relationship was noted. One participant discussed the 'negative interaction cycle' that can unfold when both a child and parent have certain negative expectations around how the other will behave. Rutter (2003) had also found that parents can struggle to communicate effectively with their child when they cannot correctly interpret their message. Bullying was also a concern raised by the participants, particularly as the children became older. Although this finding emerged as an independent

theme, in reality social factors such as bullying could potentially have a profound impact on other areas such as a child's self-esteem.

A key finding in relation to the long-term outcomes for children with DLD was the link to crime. The participants made reference to research outlining the significant numbers of young offenders and adults in the prison service who have language disorders and that this is a concern they have for the children they work with. As Bryan, Freer and Furlong (2007) discovered, between 66-90% of the prison population have language disorders, which is in stark contrast to the prevalence rate of DLD which is only 7% (IASLT, 2017) suggesting that having DLD could be considered a risk factor for engaging in crime.

#### ***5.2.4 Mitigating Factors***

Although the above-mentioned findings paint a negative picture, a crucial finding in the research was the presence of certain mitigating factors which had the potential to influence positively and negatively the outcomes for a child with DLD.

One overwhelming finding from the study was that the SLTs believed that DLD was relatively unheard of and was poorly understood. The understanding that parents, teachers and the children themselves had of DLD was found to be a mitigating factor in how a child was affected by DLD. The lack of understanding was shown to lead to parents and teachers misinterpreting a child's difficulties as laziness, boldness, lack of intelligence and lack of effort. This mirrored research by Rice, Sell and Hadley (1991) who stated that children with language difficulties can be perceived by adults as being noncompliant or inattentive. This negative perception of a child who is having legitimate struggles is undeniably going to impact them. A child who is misunderstood and blamed for their difficulties, not progressing in school due to not accessing supports and not aware that there is a reason for their language

difficulties could potentially be at a higher risk of developing mental health difficulties and having behavioural outbursts.

Another important factor was the level of support that a child received both learning support in school and general support from parents and teachers. As Glover, McCormack and Smith-Tamaray (2015) found, collaborative work from teachers and SLTs yielded the most positive results for children and the participants of this study expressed similar sentiments.

A child's insight into their difficulties was discussed as being both a negative and a positive factor for them. On the one hand, insight lead to a child being more empowered to advocate for themselves and explain what was difficult and what help they needed. In contrast to this, some children were described as being hyperaware and withdrawing from participating in activities. This finding highlights the importance of adopting the ICF framework when discussing the needs of children with DLD. Heightened insight may be a negative factor for some children and not for others. Equally, two children might be impacted differently in terms of the functional limitations that present for them.

Advancements in technology arose as a growing consideration for children with DLD. Technology was discussed as being both a benefit and an added source of pressure. It had the potential to provide children with access to information about language difficulties and to connect with other people with similar experiences. It also had the potential to increase the demands on children to communicate through language on a more continuous basis. Conti-Ramsden, Durkin and Simkin (2010) found that adolescents with DLD use mobile phones as often as their peers but engage less often in texting. This research, however, is not very recent and the manner in which young people engage with technology is constantly evolving. Participants in this study spoke about teenagers using 'Whatsapp' not text messages. Smartphones have also become the norm and as a corollary so has constant internet access.

How this affects teenagers with language difficulties should be explored further. This should also be a consideration for people working closely with teenagers with language difficulties. As Walther (2007) found, subtle pragmatic rules have emerged over time with regard to communication through technology. As this area continues to grow, incorporating technology and its use into intervention for children with DLD may be highly beneficial for them. This also follows the ICF philosophy of focusing on functional limitations and everyday participation.

### **4.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

#### **4.3.1 Strengths**

The findings of this research study should be interpreted in light of its strengths and weaknesses. One of the strengths of the study was the thorough collation and analysis of previous research in the area. This allowed for the selection of a research design that was under-utilised in the area to ensure that this study would contribute new findings to the field. The study was also conducted following ethical guidelines, ensuring that the participants were treated with respect and maintained anonymity. Another strength of the study was that the research design allowed for the collection of rich, detailed data.

#### **4.3.2 Limitations**

There were also some limitations of the study. Because of the qualitative nature of the study, generalisation of the findings to the general population is difficult. However the data can still provide rich and important information. Another key limitation was the sample size used. Five SLTs participated in this research. Dworkin (2012) summarised the sample size recommendations for qualitative research from other researchers which varied from 5-50 participants. However, a key methodological principle for rigorous qualitative research is that

saturation point should be reached. This is the point at which no new findings are added to the data from any subsequent interview (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). It must be acknowledged that due to the time constraints of this research, saturation was not reached.

An important limitation of the thematic networks framework is subjective nature of its interpretation. Researcher expectations and bias can sometimes inadvertently lead to misinterpretation. The participants could also have their own biases and there is the potential for the participants to assume causality and attribute certain behaviours to a child's diagnosis of DLD.

The gathering of data through semi-structured interviews can present with some limitations. Within this format, the researcher often becomes a co-constructor of the data (Given, 2008). As such, the researchers follow up questions to participants' response has the power to steer the conversation in a particular direction. While this does not invalidate the data gathered, it is an important consideration to note when interpreting the findings.

#### **4.4 Further Research**

In light of the limitations discussed, further research in this area could use a similar design with a larger sample size so as to reach saturation point. As well, interviewing children or teenagers with DLD directly would be an important method of gaining their own insight into their difficulties and strengths. Resilience was also mentioned as being an important factor for children's well-being, in particular for children with language difficulties. Further research should explore how resilience can be encouraged in children and how this impacts their self-esteem and overall well-being. Research exploring the use of technology among young people with DLD could determine what benefits and drawbacks it presents.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This research study explored SLTs' perspective on the impact of DLD on overall child development using a qualitative semi-structured interview design. The main findings of the study were that Psychological, Social and Educational Factors in a child's life were often affected and also that certain Mitigating Factors were highly influential in terms of how a child was impacted. This study was important clinical implications for teachers and healthcare professionals working with children with DLD as suggested a broadening of the conceptualisation of DLD. It also pointed towards raising awareness and understanding of DLD in the general public.

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# Appendix A: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORMS

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**The Impact of Developmental Language Disorder on Overall Child  
Development: Speech and Language Therapists' Perspectives**

My name is Fiona Tuite and I am conducting research in the Department of Psychology that explores the impact of Developmental Language Disorder on overall child development. This research is being conducted as part of my studies and will be submitted for examination.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves partaking in an interview. While the interview may involve some questions that might cause some minor negative feelings, this method has been used widely in research. If any of the questions do raise difficult feelings for you, contact information for support services are included on the final page.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. The interview will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. Responses will be transcribed anonymously using pseudonyms and removing identifying information so that they cannot be attributed to any one participant.

The audio recordings will be securely stored and data from the questionnaires will be transferred to electronic format and stored on a password protected computer.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact

Fiona Tuite xxxxxxxx . My supervisor can be contacted at xxxxxxxx.



**Information Sheet for study on the Impact of Developmental Language Disorder on Overall Child Development**

You are invited to participate in a research study that will form the basis for an undergraduate thesis. Please read the following information before deciding whether or not to participate.

**What are the objectives of the study?** This research aims to explore in-depth Speech and Language Therapists' Perspectives on the Impact of Developmental Language Disorder on overall child development.

**Why have I been asked to participate?** I would like to collect information from Speech and Language Therapists. The research requires that participants have experience of working with a minimum of four children with Developmental Language Disorder.

**What does participation involve?** Firstly, you will attend an interview that will last approximately forty minutes.. During this you will be asked questions about your opinions and perspectives. Some discussion may evolve naturally based on your responses. This interview will be recorded on a digital voice recorder which will then be transcribed and analysed at a later date.

**Right to withdraw** Participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time for whatever reason.

**Are there any benefits from my participation?** While there will be no direct benefit from participation studies like this can make an important contribution to our understanding of the impact of Developmental Language Disorder on child development. As such, the findings from this study may be presented at national and international conferences and will be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Interim and final reports will be prepared. However no individual participants will be identified in any publication or presentation. Individuals will not be offered any monetary or other rewards for their participation.

**Are there any risks involved in participation?** There are no risks associated with participation. Any inconvenience involved in taking part will be limited.

**Confidentiality** All individual information collected as part of the study, will be used solely for experimental purposes. They will be stored safely and will not be publicly displayed or published without prior consent.

### **Contact Details**

If you have any further questions about the research you can contact:

Researcher: xxxxxxxx

Supervisor: xxxxxxxx

**Consent Form**

**The Impact of Developmental Language Disorder on Overall Child Development: Speech and Language Therapists' Perspectives**

I have read and understood the attached Information Leaflet regarding this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study with the researcher and I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason

I agree to take part in the study

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name in print: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

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### Interview 1

Line	Speaker	Data
1	R	So how do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
2	P1	Em it can have a very significant impact across a
3		multitude of areas, I suppose one of the main difficulties I
4		would see with children coming in would be difficulties
5		with just basic communication, really functional kind of,
6		em, difficulties where they might not actually understand
7		what's been said to them whether that's by like a parent
8		or a teacher and so there's kind of a break down there
9		automatically, em
10	R	Does that have any further repercussions?
11	P1	Em it can have an impact on the relationship between the
12		parent and the child if the parent is getting increasingly
13		frustrated if they might be asking a child to say, or sorry
14		to do something or say to go get something for them but
15		if the child doesn't understand the instruction the parent
16		might just think they're not getting it and so there might
17		be elevated levels of stress
18	R	Okay, how might that impact the overall family dynamic?
19	P1	Em, it could have... Well I suppose it would depend as
20		well on the parental understanding and approaches to
21		supporting and facilitating DLD, em, but it can, what I've
22		seen in the clinic is it can have, or sort of impose a high
23		level of stress that the family feel like they're doing a

24		significant amount of work say all the time to help bring
25		on that child. And with DLD it can take the children
26		longer to learn a particular concept or to get familiar with
27		say therapy targets that we're working on so if parents
28		feel like they're doing the same old homework or tasks
29		again and again and again that would, and not seeing the
30		gains from that, that would lead to frustration
31	R	And how would that impact the child as well?
32	P1	The frustration? Well cos they feel like they're trying.
33		And I suppose it's them ultimately the diagnosis will
34		impact the most, I suppose personally and across so many
35		areas and they could feel like they're trying really hard
36		with their homework or with their therapy targets and not
37		making a lot of progress and they're being met externally
38		with stress from someone such as the parent and I
39		suppose they're getting given out to so it would definitely
40		impact their motivation to want I suppose do that
41		homework and to want to improve their overall functional
42		communication. Em... another area I would see it
43		impacting would be the school setting. I suppose simple
44		things that we would have taken for granted such as if we
45		wanted to go to the bathroom or if we wanted to ask the
46		teacher a question about our homework, most of us would
47		probably not bat an eyelid about throwing our hand up
48		and just asking that. But a child with DLD, I suppose,

49		they might not be confident that they can do that. They
50		might withdraw and not actually ask the question at all, I
51		suppose more of an opt-out kind of approach. Em, they'd
52		have difficulty understanding instructions given by their
53		teacher, I suppose following the actual task that they're
54		meant to be doing, developing their vocabulary and I
55		suppose em, with all the areas say within the curriculum
56		they'd probably need more intense input, I suppose, with
57		achieving... more intense input and patience with helping
58		them to achieve their targets
59	R	Are there any particular subjects in school or aspects of
60		school that would be more difficult or even easier for
61		them?
62	P1	Em... Well one thing that comes to mind as an aspect of
63		school that would impact them would be I suppose the
64		mixing with their peers. Again, something that we all at
65		some level took for granted in school that you're in the
66		same classroom of people for eight to fourteen years and
67		you make friends, it's just a normal part of it, whereas for
68		them not having the communication skills to just be able
69		to jump in and talk about maybe what's happening or ask
70		how to play a particular game or even to understand the
71		rules if they were included. So I suppose it definitely
72		impacts their social communication, opportunities for
73		communication and they're own mental health

74	R	Okay and would you see in social situations, would there
75		be a difference between group interactions and one to one
76		interactions?
77	P1	Em, I think this could totally depend on the child because
78		ultimately you could say a one to one interaction might, I
79		suppose, they might not feel as under pressure to
80		contribute or to speak up or to jump in or that they're
81		fighting for time and they have to have ready what they
82		want to say. And I suppose you're only talking to one
83		person. But for them if they're only answering questions
84		to that one person and they're having difficulties with it
85		they might actually feel more on the spot. In a group
86		interaction, I suppose it depends more on the child's
87		willingness or want to be a part of that group. Group
88		interactions might be easier for them if they're happy, if
89		they would prefer to fade into the background it would be
90		easier to do that there because there's more people to talk,
91		the focus isn't for them. But obviously that wouldn't be
92		ideal, we wouldn't want that to happen. I have had
93		children say that to me that they prefer the larger group
94		because there's less pressure on them to speak up because
95		somebody probably will but there can also be children in
96		groups who want to speak up but they can't jump in or if
97		they jump in they might not know how to say, or how to
98		go about asking something or telling something that they

99		want
100	R	So what kind of social situations might be more difficult?
101	P1	Em, I reckon, I suppose, social situations where you're
102		maybe not familiar with the other people at all. Em, so an
103		example of that would be say if you're in school and
104		you're in say the yard and it's just your class group there
105		you know at some, you know, all of you would have
106		some basic information about each other, you'd know the
107		child's name and you might have gathered or seen in the
108		class that one kid goes out for resource more often or
109		needs a bit more support in the classroom even if you
110		don't know the child very well there's some kind of
111		understanding there that the child might have additional
112		needs or might require more support. Other situations
113		then maybe if it was extracurricular activities such as, I
114		don't know, a music lesson or music group, or maybe
115		basketball after school in your community hall where the
116		people you're meeting might not have any background
117		information on you whatsoever, they might not be in your
118		class, they might not be in your school and even though
119		DLD wouldn't be something that would be directly
120		addressed all the time with peers, like I was saying there
121		about observations around going out for extra resource or
122		extra support, this new group of people wouldn't have
123		that so you would be viewed I suppose just like every

124		other child, which is great, but when a child is
125		experiencing difficulty in communicating there may be
126		less information or patience maybe or understanding of
127		what's going on for that child that might make them less
128		confident in mixing and might impact them socially
129	R	You mentioned confidence, is that something you would
130		see a lot?
131	P1	Yeah, em, there's a lot of children that I would meet,
132		where some of them might have DLD but some of them
133		might have just really severe communication needs,
134		whether that be with speech sounds or a stammer and I
135		think across the board, most of the time, the more severe
136		a difficulty is the less like a child is, I suppose, to be
137		confident or to be sure of themselves. Eh, a presentation I
138		would see a lot would be a child might present as being
139		very low in confidence, or very anxious, or very shy and
140		could take a while to warm up to you but when they do
141		and they understand that you're there as a support to them
142		em it's a bit easier. But confidence and anxiety would
143		definitely be areas I would see direct implications in and
144		a lot of em research em out there at the minute, I suppose,
145		is showing a strong correlation between DLD and
146		significant communication impairments in younger years,
147		leading to higher rates of anxiety and depression from
148		adolescent years onwards

149	R	Ok so how might this present in a child?
150	P1	In the clinic or just generally?
151	R	In their day to day life what might that look like?
152	P1	Em, again it can vary so much but I suppose a child might
153		be less, I suppose if they're lacking in confidence and
154		they're anxious about every communication exchange
155		that happens, every interaction, it would be linked with
156		their awareness as well, the more aware they are of it, of
157		their difficulties they'd be more likely to have lower
158		confidence or to have higher anxiety levels and that might
159		look like reduced participation in the classroom, they
160		might sort or prefer to play by themselves, they might
161		revert to earlier stages of communication, like there's one
162		child I had in the clinic who could form sentences, he
163	could em use a lot expressive language but he wasn't	
164	confident in his use of it so he was actually just showing	
165	me lots of things and trying to use gesture because that's	
166	what he felt was safe, so yeah...	
167	R	And you mentioned a minute ago about how these
168		difficulties can present in other mental health problems as
169		they get older, would you a big difference in younger
170		children and older children and how they might be
171		impacted by DLD?
172	P1	Yeah, em, I suppose as they get older there is that
173		heightened awareness of what specifically they're finding

174		difficult and just how different they might feel they are
175		from other people. Em, the communication breakdown,
176		sorry in social situations can become increasingly
177		apparent as well and I think it's when this awareness gets
178		to a point where, I suppose, they're realising just the
179		different challenges that they would have versus another
180		child, is when they can actually start to withdraw from
181		participating and I suppose as much, and that's when the
182		mental health em difficulties can start to manifest a bit
183		more
184	R	What might be the result of having these sort of mental
185		health difficulties?
186	P1	As an adolescent?
187	R	Yeah
188	P1	Well they might be less, well I suppose they'd be at risk
189		of discontinuing their education and dropping out,
190		specific behavioural difficulties and there's a very high
191		link between children who present with DLD in younger
192		years, and as we know DLD is a condition that persists
193		into adulthood, and I suppose with engaging in criminal
194		activity in their teens
195	R	Okay and why do you think that link might exist?
196	P1	Em, so even if I go back to talking about the younger
197		years for just a second children, it's something that we
198		see often is that children with DLD, em if they're finding

199	it difficult to communicate and express themselves, I
200	suppose, they're behaviour can take a bit of a knock in
201	that they might be described or known as an angry or a
202	bold child because they can't communicate effectively
203	and they might kind of lash out. If this , I suppose
204	manifests as a child gets older and as we know their
205	condition of DLD and their difficulties will persist as
206	well, then I suppose in a way if they're finding a situation
207	difficult they're falling back on behaviours and coping
208	strategies that they learned when they were younger and
209	never squashed out the bad ones. I suppose there's no
210	responsibility or onus on them to stay in school past the
211	age of sixteen and if that's an area for them, especially in
212	secondary school, I suppose the vocabulary, the
213	curriculum gets so much harder and if they don't have to
214	be there anymore they may decide that they don't want to
215	be there anymore and I suppose they still have the history
216	of relying on bad behaviour as a coping mechanism and
217	we know there's a strong link with communication
218	difficulties and DLD in areas of low socio-economic
219	status so that linked in with potentially cultural
220	acceptance of crime depending on different areas and I
221	suppose school drop-out, less pressure to go to college or
222	to stay in school or to get your leaving cert, it can kind of
223	make it easier for them to do that

224	R	So you're saying DLD is quite common in areas of low
225		socio-economic status, how might that have an effect on a
226		child's, on how DLD affects a child?
227	P1	Well, em, I actually work in quite a disadvantaged are
228		myself and I suppose the difficult challenges I would see
229		in clinic, cos I've worked in areas that aren't as
230		disadvantaged, would be lower attendance at therapy
231		appointments, reduced understanding of what a diagnosis
232		of DLD means and just how much work is needed to do
233		that. So even if there is the attendance in clinic the level
234		or understanding of homework that we'd set to do from
235		week to week just wouldn't be the same or mightn't be
236		carried out or carried out as frequently or as described or
237		demonstrated in the session. Em, there can be, generally,
238		there can be more expectation of a therapist to fix the
239		child, like I said if that understanding of what DLD is and
240		I suppose knowing that it's a life-long condition and you
241		do need all hands on deck for working towards the
242		different goals and sub-goals that you are setting. So yeah
243		the lower attendance, lower carry out of homework,
244		reduced understanding of DLD and what that means
245		which lacks across the whole population really
246	R	Okay, what do you think is the wider understanding of
247		DLD and the impact that it has?
248	P1	Em, I think it's actually quite poor. I think people

249		understand, I suppose, even if I was telling someone what
250		my job was they might, you know sometimes people will
251		say oh I went to speech therapy when I was younger or I
252		know someone who went and they're fine now, there's
253		always nearly that expectation that they'll be fine, or they
254		just need it for a short while and then they don't need it
255		anymore which is obviously best case scenario for us.
256		Em, but for DLD I don't think there that understanding
257		there that it is a lifelong condition, the areas in which it
258		can affect a child and what supports they actually need,
259		whether that's clinic, school, the classroom, resource, at
260		home or with extended family members. I don't think
261		people have a great understanding of it
262	R	And how would this lack of understanding affect the
263		child?
264	P1	Well em, I suppose, as I touched on earlier, the older they
265		get the more aware they are of potentially how they might
266		face more challenges than their peers, challenges that
267		might appear more basic and if people don't have the
268		understanding of this is what X presents with and we just
269		need to do this and accommodate it or facilitate either
270		more time or more support with that, they're not going to
271		get what he needs from it. Em, the child, yeah, sorry I'm
272		after losing the run of myself. Yeah, it would affect the
273		child because people might have known he went to

274		speech therapy when he was younger and they might not
275		understand why he still has difficulties, or why he or she
276		still has difficulties. Em, why they might find it more
277		difficult to apply for a job, going in and doing their
278		homework, or sitting an exam, is a much bigger deal for
279		someone with such significant communication needs is
280	R	And so how do you think people with DLD might be
281		perceived by the general public?
282	P1	Em, I think they'd be perceived and can be perceived as I
283		suppose bold in younger years if the behaviour, the bad
284		behaviour continues to manifest. Em, they might come
285		across as being not very intelligent, even though a lot of
286		the time with DLD, especially when it still had the old
287		term of SSLI, the child had to have average IQ or average
288		cognitive abilities. So in terms of their cognitive
289		functioning they're just like you or me but they just have
290		a difficulty with communication in isolation mainly.
291		Sorry, could you say the question again, I've kind of
292		forgotten
293	R	Em, how might children with DLD be perceived?
294	P1	Em, yeah I worked with a teenager before with DLD and
295		he told me he, that people would kind of get frustrated
296		with him if they had to repeat an instruction for him
297		again, that he was getting called a thick and that yeah and
298		he was kind of being made fun of for being, in his words

299		slow, when that's not the case. Whereas if he'd gotten,
300		he's a prime candidate where if he'd gotten the support,
301		even if that was just a repetition or more understanding of
302		what was actually going on for him that it would have
303		made a world of difference
304	R	And you said that he was being picked on, is that
305		something that you would see a lot?
306	P1	Em, yeah it is actually. I'm just thinking there across the
307		different ages of children with DLD I've met, em... the,
308		the older ones I suppose, yeah, yeah, they would be less
309		likely to be included in activities, they might be actively
310		excluded from activities whether it be in like the yard or
311		parties, which can be very difficult to hear about as a
312		therapist. I suppose the younger children, when they're
313		very very young, maybe four or five, maybe not so much
314		because their own awareness and other children's
315		awareness might not extend to that at that age. But
316		definitely a link between the older they get, around seven
317		or eight onwards, they'd kind of be more aware of what's
318		going on
319	R	Okay so do you think, are there any day-to-day activities
320		that might be affected by a child having DLD?
321	P1	Em, I suppose for this question it would depend on their
322		age and how much intervention that they've had and kind
323		of that they've maybe identified what supports or

324		strategies work best for them. But definitely for the
325		younger ones before they'd have come to that or before
326		they'd have picked out what's most helpful for them I
327		think it could affect just about anything. Like I touched
328		on earlier, if you want to go out to the bathroom or if you
329		want to ask your teacher a question they wouldn't maybe
330		participate as much or they'd have more of maybe an opt-
331		out approach to learning. Em, so understanding basic
332		questions or instructions whether that be at home or at
333		school, if they get a bus to school, from teachers, from
334		peers. Em, I suppose difficulty in expressing themselves,
335		they might not know what to say and that's a hard one to
336		kind of pinpoint because it could happen just about any
337		time of the day in whatever they're trying to do and it just
338		stays with them. Yeah so it's kind of hard to pinpoint the
339		activities because it's actually just so interlinked with
340		absolutely everything and every communication exchange
341		or interaction that happens, it's going to be there
342	R	And you mentioned about them having the right supports
343		or strategies, what kind of supports or strategies do you
344		think a child with DLD might need or might benefit
345		from?
346	P1	Well, if they were a candidate for the language class that
347		would be fantastic and even if they got to, some children
348		can only get in for one year or two years, two years

349		maximum. I feel like they get so much from that, it's a
340		small classroom with a maximum of seven children and
341		they've access to an SNA and SLT individually three
342		times a week. And I think what's most important about
343		that setting is the link and the relationship between the
344		SLT and their class teacher and their class as a whole that
345		what is viewed as, you know school generally is where
346		children go to learn, these children will find that more
347		difficult or it might take them longer to do things because
348		of their communication so if they have a communication
349		expert on site and in a smaller setting it's brilliant, it's
350		brilliant and they can come on just so so much but
351		unfortunately not every child with DLD gets to access
352		that so they'd be relying very much on hopefully being
353		able to access resource teaching. I suppose having a very
354		understanding and accommodating class teacher and link
355		with their like speech and language therapist, likely to be
356		community-based. And I suppose strategies, em, might
357		just be, or supports could just I suppose start with
358		education, like I said the general understanding of DLD is
359		just quite poor and if the child knows that they do have
360		these difficulties, even a bit of education with them from
361		a young age around how to ask for help or how to look
362		for clarification that even if these difficulties do persist,
363		they know how to access some bit of help to help them

364		with whatever is going on for them at the time
365	R	Brilliant, you mentioned about the language class that
366		what makes that beneficial is the collaboration between
367		teacher and SLT, do you think that that's very important?
368	P1	Oh yeah I think it's paramount really because even if, cos
369		I know classrooms can have up to like thirty children,
370		most classrooms, even if they didn't have the link
371		between SLT it's a smaller class of maximum seven
372		children, granted all of the children will have significant
373		needs but there's more, that alone would facilitate more
374		one to one time, more attention for each child so it would
375		be more difficult for them to opt out if that's what they
376		are choosing to do, I suppose that they would have to
377		communicate a bit more and that being the setting where
378		they could spend between twenty to thirty hours of their
379		week learning and them being there because they find
380		difficult, they've a communication expert with them on
381		site working closely with them to come up with
382		individual education plans, discussing the curriculum and
383		the SLT targeting similar topics and vocab at the same
384		time that they're doing it in the classroom. Just to give
385		them every chance, and more chance to be listened to and
386		learning more about it. Any progress that's being made in
387		the individual therapy sessions gets fed back to the
388		teacher. You might find something one to one, like if he's

389		struggling and I do this that helps him and being able to
390		give that information to a teacher and just working
391		alongside each other, like it's just a brilliant resource or
392		support to have and it's actually only, such a shame that
393		only a few children in the country get to access it in
394		comparison to the need that there actually is
395	R	Great, so just to wrap up there, is there anything else that
396		you'd like to add or add on to what we were talking
397		about?
398	P1	Em no, I think we've sort of covered all the main bits
399		there

## Interview 2

Line	Speaker	Data
400	R	Okay, so how do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
401	P2	Well first of all it's hard for them to make themselves
402		understood and to understand what's going on in the
403		world around them and that would cover, for little kids
404		their parents and their preschool and their friends, and for
405		the older ones, it would include include their school and
406		the subjects that they're studying and to follow what's
407		going on around them with that
408	R	So what impact would that have on them if they're
409		finding it hard to understand subjects at school?
410	P2	Well they would be finding it very hard to keep up with
411		their class, so they would be struggling and that would
412		affect their emotions, feeling their self-confidence
413		reducing because of that. They feel different to the other
414		children in the class cos they're able to keep up, they
415		might be getting extra support which again shows them
416		that they're struggling and that they're feeling a little bit
417		different and it may have impacts on their learning in that
418		because they're not able to access the information that
419		impacts further down the line in terms of their exam
420		results and where their exam results can lead them
421	R	Mm-hmm, so you mentioned they might have reduced
422		confidence, would you see any other difficulties in that

423		regard?
424	P2	Yeah for, well for the older you would see it negatively
425		affecting their self-esteem and so their ability to interact
426		with their friends might be reduced. Less so with the little
427		ones, maybe they're not as aware of what's going on but
428		with the older ones who are struggling with their self-
429		esteem, their self-confidence, I've lost my train of
430		thought... say your question again
431	R	Em, how- would you see a lack of confidence often in
432		these children?
433	P2	Yes and I think you asked how would it affect- ok so
434		they're self-confidence is going to affect their ability to
435		make friends and interact with their friends and yes it
436		does happen a lot and it's one of the things you would see
437		in the research to say that this is one of the ongoing
438		difficulties for children with SLI or DLD. Em, that it can
439		have a really negative impact on them because they're
440		finding it hard to interact with their friends and interact
441		with their subjects and it's a negative experience for them
442	R	Are there any particular subjects or any aspects of school
443		that you think might be more difficult for them?
444	P2	The language based ones. Often parents will say English
445		is really hard or Irish is really hard. They'll say that maths
446		is very hard when they start coming into the problem
447		solving with maths that that can be really difficult for

448		them
449	R	And you mentioned that younger children mightn't be
450		aware, when might children start to develop awareness of
451		their difficulties?
452	P2	They, well they may develop it from quite young so they
453		may be very frustrated and their behaviour might be
454		impacted so if they're trying to get their message across
455		and people aren't understanding them you can get
456		toddlers who are screaming and giving up. They may not
457		understand the reason why, so parents might say they're
458		trying really hard, they think they're explaining what
459		they're trying to say but they just aren't so they're not
460		aware that this is the cause of the difficulties and when
461		they get that awareness varies very much from child to
462		child, I guess based on their experiences
463		
464	R	And could you tell me a bit more about the behavioural
464		difficulties you told me you might see?
465	P2	Yeah, you you might have children who instead of being
466		able to communicate what they want or don't want that
467		they resort to physical uses. So you might have a little
468		pre-schooler who will be pushing their friends around
469		because they can't say I want that toy or it's my turn.
470		They need to use their physical skills to explain
471		themselves a bit more than they should. Or you might

472		have their reaction to an instruction which is not expected
473		so someone might say to them I want you to this first and
474		then go and do that and the child doesn't understand that
475		concept and so they end up doing the wrong thing and
476		then they get into trouble because of that. So it's not
477		always their fault, I suppose, but they can be perceived as
478		if they're misbehaving because they don't always
479		understand what's going on around them. You'll get em,
480		children you are acting out trying to mask the difficulties
481		that they have so you might have them being asked to do
482		something in class and you end up with the child using a
483		misbehaviour to divert the fact that they haven't got a
484		clue what's going on, they're not able to complete the
485		task. Their retention can often be affected as well, so
486		because they're not understanding they're not tuning into
487		what's being said in the class that they can appear to be in
488		their own little world that's not really their fault, they just
489		can't follow what's happening
490	R	And you mentioned them acting out against their friends,
491		how might this impact them or any further repercussions
492		of this?
493	P2	The pushing and the shoving? Yeah it can leave them a
494		little bit isolated, so can the language difficulties in that
495		the peers recognise that they can't have a conversation,
496		they can't have a nice play, nice and gentle, interactive,

497		they need to be able to negotiate with their peers. When
498		all these things are failing them they end up a little bit
499		isolated, not able to make the friends that they should be
500		able to because their language isn't allowing them to form
501		those bonds, particularly as they get older and the
502		language becomes a part of their play
503	R	Would there be particular social situations that might be
504		more difficult for them?
505	P2	In terms of their friendships?
506	R	Mm-hmm
507	P2	Not that I can think of but it would certainly be for
508		children from seven plus when they start to have to take
509		on roles when they're playing imaginatively or to
510		understand rules when they're playing in the playground
511		they would find it very difficult. For older children it
512		would be things like social media and not being able to
513		make sense of the texts and the Whatsapps and whatever
514		else is going on
515	R	And would there be a difference maybe between group
516		and one to one interactions?
517	P2	I haven't come across that, let me have a think about it for
518		a minute
519	R	Yeah, that's okay
520	P2	I'm not sure, I think it would depend on the
521		communication partner. I think if you have a very good

522		bond with somebody often you'll find that a child with a
523		language disorder has a good bond with somebody that is
524		a year or two below them because their language is on a
525		par and they can engage in the right way. So if you have a
526		pairing like that I think the interaction will go well but
527		maybe with somebody of their own age it wouldn't. I do
528		wonder if maybe in a group situation they'd be able to
529		mask it a bit better because often children with a language
530		disorder would try to cover up the fact that they don't
531		understand maybe by covering up with jokes or, like I
532		was saying earlier, the behaviours might start to be
533		different. I think it would depend on the ability of their
534		peers to interact with them
535	R	Okay brilliant, are there any other areas of a child's life
536		that you think might be impacted by DLD?
537	P2	Well we've talked about school and how they won't
538		manage necessarily to keep up with the curriculum.
539		We've talked about their friendships, that they're going to
540		be affected. We've talked a little bit their emotions, that
541		they might need a little bit of help with their self-
542		confidence. Em sometimes we'd refer them to
543		Psychology because of the negative impacts they need a
544		little bit of extra support around their resilience and
545		building other skills and acknowledging other strengths to
546		counteract that. Em, I'm not sure where else, I'm sure

547		there are, my head is going blank, sorry
548	R	That's okay, and what do you think might be maybe some
549		long-term implications from these difficulties that they
550		experience?
551	P2	Well you can end up having a negative perception of
552		yourself and that can impact, depending on the support
553		you get, across all areas of life in terms of relationships
554		with friends you might end up being quite isolated, not
555		only as a child but as an adult. It can impact on your
556		ability to achieve your career that you're looking for so
557		because of your difficulties with the learning you might
558		not achieve the points that you want to go and do
559		whatever academic career it is that you want to do. And it
560		can mean that you might have to change your goals in
561		terms of a career to something that's more related to your
562		strengths and less language-based so that reduces the
563		freedom they have to achieve the way they would like to.
564		And reduces their ability to communicate with other
565		social groups all through their life they will have a little
566		bit of difficulty being able to engage the way other child,
567		or adults, young adults might
569		
570	R	Are there any particular day-to-day activities you think
571		might be affected by a child having DLD?
572	P2	Their school work and their homework, it can be a real

573		struggle for them to learn how to study so being able to
574		organise the information that they've got, being able to
575		get it down into an accessible format, being able to retain
576		that information and hold onto that. Their memory can
578		sometimes be affected to so they can have difficulty
579		remembering on top of the difficulty with their language.
580		Em, they can have difficulty engaging with other people.
581		Everyday involves interacting with their teachers, with
582		their peers, with their families. And then having this
583		difficulty with communication means they're not going to
584		succeed as well as they ought to. You've got the difficulty
585		with behaviour that might be coming up in class and
586		inhibiting their ability to do their work in class, inhibiting
587		their ability play out in the playground or interact with
588		their friends, em.
589	R	You mentioned that their memory might be impacted,
590		would there be any other nonverbal skills or areas that
591		might be affected by DLD?
591	P2	Their processing skills are slow, so the information that
592		they take in takes a long time to get in and work through
593		and then formulate their responses and then answer the
594		questions that they're looking for. They'd often have
595		associated difficulties with literacy, so often you might
596		have a child with DLD and dyslexia which can both
597		impact each other and make it even more difficult to learn

598		through school. Em, there was another one that was
599		coming into my head there, em... Oh, often there's fine
600		motor skills and organisational difficulties that we need
601		occupational therapy to help with. Difficulties with
602		coordination can often coincide with a language
603		impairment
604	R	Okay and so what do you think might be the wider
605		understanding in the general public of DLD?
606	P2	I think it's very limited. There's a campaign called
607		RALLI, they changed their name so that mightn't be
608		exactly accurate, but they were looking at how little is
609		actually known about Developmental Language Disorder
610		versus other things like ASD or intellectual disability and
611		it's really not well known and that's because it's called
612		about forty different names but they've combined it down
613		to DLD now. But people don't understand so they don't
614		see what that person is isolate or why they aren't learning
615		or why that person is behaving the way they are because
616		people don't understand, they don't understand even the
617		families themselves find it very hard to understand why
618		the difficulties are there. And you explain to them that it's
619		purely the language that's the difficulty for the child and
620		they find it hard to put it out and they're worried about
621		their general learning abilities in terms of a cognitive
622		impairment. But there isn't a lot of information for them

623		out there to go to and read. There is now a little bit more
624		with the RALLI campaign but there has been very little
625		out there available to them.
626	R	So how might they often be perceived?
627	P2	Slow. People would feel that they're badly behaved, that
628		they're stupid or some of them will have a stammer so
629		you have all the negativities that are associated with a
630		stammer and so they'll get teased for that
631	R	Would teasing be something you see often in children
632		with DLD?
633	P2	Em, not in my experience but I think that's partly because
634		the older children that we would have on the caseload
635		tend to fall away from therapy. So the younger ones it's
636		very well managed, there are supportive parents,
637		supportive teachers keeping an eye and if there is a little
638		bit of bullying it's dealt with but I would feel that as the
639		children get older they fall away from our caseload and
640		it's at that point that you'll start to see a little bit more
641		freedom on behalf of their peers to be able to engage in
642		that
643	R	Okay and you mentioned that the understanding of DLD
644		is quite limited, how do you think this affects the
645		children?
646	P2	I think it's difficult for others to figure out what's going
647		on to recognise that there's a difficulty there, to refer

648		them for support, to understand it when it does come
649		through and to understand, for example for teachers or
650		preschool teachers how to help and what to do to make
651		the difference. I think the role there falls to the speech
652		and language therapist to explain that, the resources are
653		so stretched that it's very hard to have enough time for
654		teachers and families to be able to understand it
655	R	Okay and what resources and supports would be most
656		beneficial for a child with DLD?
657	P2	It depends slightly on the child but the language class is a
658		really useful support for some children, so some of them
659		that are really struggling in school and aren't managing to
660		keep up can apply for language class. They have to meet
661		Department of Education criteria, which is different to
662		SLT criteria, but if they do meet that they can apply to the
663		language class for some supports. I've forgotten your
664		question again slightly but what supports do they need?
665	R	What resources or supports would be beneficial?
666	P2	You'll get intensive speech and language therapy in the
667		language class and that's what a child with DLD needs
668		early on, they need intensive support to try and catch back
669		up and remedy the difficulties because they don't retain
670		the difficulties that they learn. They learn a bit and then
671		they will lose it if it's not reinforced and having intensive
672		SLT can be really helpful. And then combining that with

673		the parents or the school or whoever else is involved in
674		the child's care, trying to get that impact on em, or trying
675		to get them to be able to continue with that approach with
676		the children to be able to put in place all those supports
677		throughout their day, throughout the school year or
678		throughout the time that they're trying to learn and that
679		can be really really useful having everybody working
680		together. And that can include somebody like an
681		Occupational Therapist if they happen to be going to an
682		Occupational Therapist that you can manipulate the way
683		you present the information to help them process what's
684		going on or to access it a bit easier
685	R	Okay, are there any other impacts or difficulties that you
686		would like to comment on?
687	P2	Yeah there's one that just popped into my head, em quite
688		a lot of the prison population have language difficulties so
689		em, there is a relationship between having language
690		disorder and your likelihood to go on to I suppose, to be
691		involved in crime. So em, I'm not sure that that's
692		understood, I think there's a little bit of awareness around
693		it but certainly it's not something that we would deal with
694		in the nought to eighteen group but I think it's worthwhile
695		being aware that it can lead to difficulties and
696		involvement in crime.
696	R	Why do you think that link might exist?

697	P2	I haven't read the research in about ten years but I think
698		it's probably related to the difficulty they have in
699		accessing an appropriate career and having a more
700		positive experience of education and positive experience
701		of interacting with other people that they're more
702		vulnerable to being led by other people and to be lead
703		away from a legal way of living because they don't have
704		the opportunities maybe that other people might have
705	R	Okay I think that's all my questions, if there's anything
706		else that you'd like to add?
707	P2	Yeah no I think that's everything

### Interview 3

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
708	R	So how do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
709	P3	Em, well it impacts them in lots... lots of different ways.
710		So academically, socially and then, I suppose, because
712		it's a life-long impairment that as they get older it impacts
713		them in terms of employment and forming different types
714		of relationships as they get older as well. So usually when
715		we would meet children in the clinic who we would
716		suspect have DLD or might go on to get a diagnosis of
717		DLD a lot of times they aren't following instructions in
718		school or maybe aren't saying much. Em, but there would
719		be other children who might present as if they have a lot
720		of red flags for autism because they're impacted quite
721		socially so they're not able to interact with their peers or
722		form relationships like you might expect at that age
723	R	Okay could you tell me a bit more about how they might
724		be impacted academically?
725	P3	Yeah so a lot of the times what we would hear from
726		teachers and parents and would observe from children in
727		school is that they're not able to follow instructions
728		within the classroom or on the yard so they're not even
729		able to do the basics in terms of accessing the curriculum
730		because they haven't understood the simple instructions

731		maybe like go get your books and sit down, so it might
732		even be as basic as that. Em, then obviously if they don't
733		understand what they're being asked to do that impacts
734		their ability to access their curriculum. Even things like
735		understanding concepts when it comes to Maths, when
736		Maths becomes more language-loaded as they move
737		through school and then, I suppose, if they have
738		expressive language difficulties, things like their ability to
740		say put together a narratives or recall information and
741		retell it to people can be impacted so it can affect then
742		across all subject areas. And then... what was the other
743		thing I was going to say? Oh with Irish as well, obviously
744		because the difficulty in learning an additional language
745		because their ability to learn language is impaired in the
746		first place it's not restricted to learning Irish as an
747		additional and obviously that's a compulsory subject
748	R	So would there be subjects that you think would tend to
749		be easier or harder for a child with DLD?
750	P3	Yeah I think em, anecdotally from what I've seen they
751		tend to do better in Maths when they're younger when it's
752		more concrete and then when they get older and
753		obviously as they move through the curriculum when
754		they have to have a better knowledge of concepts, so say
755		for things like Maths where things like less than means
756		the same as minus or as take away, like when language-

757		when Maths becomes more language loaded that can
758		become harder so things that are a little bit more concrete
759		with less of a language impact can be easier like Maths
760		initially. But I think a lot of the time they'll kind of
761		struggle across the curriculum in terms of language, yeah
762	R	Okay and what kind of further repercussions would this
763		have for them?
764	P3	Em... I think generally children with DLD a lot of the
765		aren't adequately supported in school and I think that
766		comes down to a lack of resources but it also comes down
767		to a lack of understand of what DLD is and the impact
768		that it actually has. So I think maybe through one thing or
769		another children, they're not able to access the
770		curriculum. Em, and then obviously as they go through
771		school if they haven't grasped the basics it makes things,
772		they haven't got those building blocks like in place to...
773		Em, I suppose just to learn and to acquire knowledge as
774		they get older and that obviously has a knock-on effect
775		into secondary school trying to pick exam subjects and do
776		exams. So yeah, I think it kind of, it tends to be a bit of a,
777		what's the word I'm looking for, so it escalates as they
778		get older
779	R	So would you see a difference between younger children
780		with DLD and older children with DLD?
781	P3	Yeah I think a lot of the younger kids can mask it quite

782		well because they can copy their peers up until a certain
783		point, so maybe up until around first class, they can, they
784		might not have understood what the teacher has asked the
786		to do but they can copy what their peers are doing. And
787		then generally because younger children, their
788		understanding of language will be a bit more simplistic
789		maybe, so they might be able to mask their difficulties a
790		bit more up until around first class and then after that
791		there might be a big jump, just from what I hear from
792		teachers, there's a big jump from the type of work in the
793		curriculum from first to second class. So as they get
794		older, there's definitely, academically it's definitely
795		harder as they get older because the curriculum is
796		becoming more challenging and then socially it becomes
797		a lot harder because they stand out a lot more to their
798		peers because they're not able to kind of join in on
799		conversations and make friends and participate as easily
800		as they might have been when they were younger. And
801		similarly then their peers when they're younger aren't as
802		aware of the difficulties they're having I think
803	R	Okay so what kind of social situations might be more or
804		less difficult for them?
805	P3	Em I think, more difficult ones are ones that are maybe
806		less structured so maybe when they're out in the yard and
807		they kind of just have to approach their peers and initiate.

808		Or maybe when a peer approaches them and initiates a
809		conversation they might not be able to participate in that
810		cos they just don't know how to. So less structured things
811		like that like free play, break time, or maybe when they're
812		in large groups, so things like football training or you
813		know, swimming lessons, something like that. Probably
814		children with DLD will do better in smaller group settings
815		where it's maybe more structured so maybe like, one to
816		one or smaller group activities and when they're kind of
817		engaged in a familiar activity. So they're not trying to
818		deal with, I suppose, an element of learning something
819		new, if that makes sense
820	R	And how might these difficulties impact their ability to
821		make and maintain friendships?
822	P3	Em, I think because obviously social skills and language
823		are so interconnected if children don't know what to say
824		to people, to friends, that obviously that has a big impact
825		on how they can form relationships. Or if you even think
826		about your own friendships as a child, a teenager, an
827		adult, like you make friends with people that you can chat
828		with and that you have lots in common with, em and
829		that's it's easy to talk to. And I think with kids with DLD
830		we often see that they're narrative or conversational skills
831		are poor so that's quite isolating I think if you can't
832		partake in a conversation properly that can really impact

833		your ability to make friends. And then it's hard for other
834		children because children can be quite blunt, I suppose, so
835		if they feel that someone is maybe a bit weird because
836		obviously their own understanding of language and stuff,
837		you know they might not want to devote the time to
838		understanding if they're not willing to engage in it
839		
840	R	You mentioned that they might be isolated. How would
841		being isolated then affect the child with DLD?
842	P3	Em, self-esteem, I suppose, their self-confidence. Like,
843		no kid wants to be the child who doesn't have any
844		friends. So I think that can have a massive knock-on
845		effect on their self-esteem and confidence and just their
846		own kind of sense of self. Especially because you're, I
847		suppose, children can be really conscious and you're, that
848		really forms part of your identity when you're younger,
849		your peer group and who you're friends are. Em, so I
850		think if you're not able to form and maintain those
851		relationships it can be, yeah it can have a big impact on
852		your self-esteem and self-confidence. And like, especially
853		in primary school like and in secondary school, like
854		everyone wants to be friends with the cool person or the
855		like the popular group and if you're not able to establish
856		even those baseline friendships I think it would have a big
857		impact on your confidence.

858		
859	R	So would you see a difference in the self-esteem or
860		confidence of a child with DLD versus a child with
861		typical language skills?
862	P3	Yeah, yeah definitely. Like some children with DLD
863		maybe are stronger expressively so they might chat away
864		and they can maybe mask their skills a bit. But I think a
865		lot of the time children with DLD are like very aware of
866		their difficulties and that can have a big impact then
867		because they're reluctant to participate in things because
868		em, cos they know they're just not going to be able to,
869		you know, I suppose they're not going to be able to either
870		understand what's happening or they're not going to be
871		able to talk about what's happening. And I think then like
872		they become kind of shy and withdrawn. Like one child
873		that I'm thinking of that I'm working with at the minute,
874		like he is really isolated in school and he's really shy and
875		his parents have put his language difficulties down to him
876		being shy but I have seen him with his sister and his
877		parents and he... you know, he gets on well with them.
878		His teachers would have said that as he's gotten older, cos
879		he's in second class now, that he's just changed year after
880		year, like he's become really withdrawn and like quite
881		anxious looking. Like even when I observed him in
882		school, like he's terrified when he's called on in class to

883		answer a question cos he doesn't, he knows he's not
884		going to be able to answer it, I suppose. So yeah I think
885		oftentimes there is a big difference between children with
886		typical language skills and DLD, a massive difference
887	R	And you mentioned that they're very aware, do you think
888		that, or what role does a child's awareness play in how
889		they're impacted?
890	P3	I think, em, I think they're awareness can be really
891		beneficial because you can have a more frank discussion
892		with them of why they're finding maybe certain aspects
893		of language difficult and maybe how you're going to try
894		support them. And I think maybe if a child is aware of
895		their difficulties it can be really motivating, like an older
896		child I'm thinking of now. She has DLD and she actually
897		wants to go on and to become like a learning support
898		teacher because she feels like that would have made a
899		really big difference to her in national school if she'd had
900		that support so she has really good insight. And as well
901		because she's in secondary school she's able to kind of,
902		like she's able to sit down and tell her teachers what she
903		finds difficult and what would make her life a bit easier.
904		So I think it can be good in that sense because children
905		can be motivated to work on these skills and can
906		actually... Honestly, their insight is the best insight into it
907		if they can describe to you what's difficult. I do think on

908		the other hand then some children, like this little boy it
909		can have a bit of a negative effect because he's so
910		reluctant to participate in things, including therapy
911		activities, because he's kind of just convinced that he's
912		not going to be able to understand or to do what you want
913		him to do. So I think it's kind of a positive and a negative,
914		depending on the child I think and maybe their level of
915		need
916	R	And in what other settings might you see a child impacted
917		by DLD?
918	P3	So apart from...
919	R	Yeah you mentioned school-
920	P3	Oh yeah so well I suppose, even at home and that's
921		probably where we maybe pick up on kids initially,
922		parents who say they don't follow directions at home,
923		or... So I think it would have an impact on school. Just
924		out in the community when they're like whatever, doing
925		their hobbies, whether it's like scouts or football or music
926		lessons I think it will have a massive impact. And then
927		obviously as children get older because they become
928		more social so things like going into town on a Saturday
929		or like going to the disco or anything like that, like that's
930		all going to be impacted by their language ability and
931		that's before they ever get to college or a work
932		environment

933		
934	R	Yeah
935	P3	Yeah
936	R	And so you mentioned at home, how might a child with
937		DLD, how might that impact the family dynamic?
938	P3	Em, I think it can be very stressful for parents. I think
939		often they kind of think, say let's say for younger kids
940		when they first show signs of a language disorder like can
941		they not hear me? Are they not listening? Do they not
942		understand me? And then as I was saying as some of
943		those kids can, when they're younger can have a real
944		similar profile to children with red flags for ASD, I think
945		some parents sort of think as well, is there something else
946		going on? Then I think because people's understanding
947		and awareness of DLD is really really poor, em, I think
948		even then once they do, once they're told you're child has
949		developmental language disorder that can, I don't know if
950		that really explains to them what they're dealing with.
951		Like I think if you tell, if you give someone a diagnosis
952		like that their child has autism, okay they mightn't have
953		an excellent understanding of it but they have an
954		awareness. Whereas I feel like for ninety nine out of a
955		hundred people DLD is going to be a brand new
956		diagnosis. So I think that can be stressful and then maybe,
967		yeah that probably puts stress on the family and I don't

958		know if it really answers a lot of questions when they get
959		that diagnosis because I don't think they really
960		understand what it means.
961	R	So what do you think is the wider understanding of DLD
962		among the general public?
963	P3	Yeah I think it's very poor. Em, and I know obviously
964		there's a big effort to create more of, more of an
965		awareness around it. Em, yeah, I think, yeah I think it's
966		poor. And even among like teachers and like people who
967		work with kids with DLD don't have a great
968		understanding of it. I think the thing that really kind of
969		evades people is that it's a lifelong impairment. So that
970		this person will like for their lives struggle with language,
971		that that's always going to be difficult. Em but I know
972		myself even before I went to college I had never heard of,
973		well SLI as it was at the time. And when I think back to
974		school now I can think of people who probably stand out
975		to me now as people who like who might have had a
976		language impairment who I might have thought at the
977		time just needed, like learning support or maybe had
978		learning difficulties or like behaviour or inattention
979		difficulties, but probably, maybe they did have a
980		diagnosis of SLI. But that just wasn't something that
981		came into your head, you just didn't know about it.
982	R	And you said you might have thought they had behaviour

983		and attention difficulties, is that something you might see
984		often in children with DLD?
985	P3	Yeah and I think there's probably a couple of thing that
986		contribute to it. So again, not understanding what's being
987		asked of you in the classroom, or in any situation,
988		whether it's at home or in the community. Like
989		frustration I think is probably a big one, so like acting out
990		because you're frustrated by your own language ability.
991		So yeah I think behaviour and inattention, they're
992		definitely two things where there can be a big overlap
993		yeah, with DLD
994	R	And how might those difficulties manifest or how might
995		they present?
996	P3	So I think a lot of the times we'd see kids with kind of
997		poor attention and maybe challenging behaviours but also
997		there's some kids then who are really well behaved and
999		don't want to draw any attention on themselves. Like that
1000		little boy who I said is hyper aware of his difficulties,
1001		he's quiet as a mouse in the classroom and a lot of the
1002		time then his difficulties go unnoticed cos he's not kind
1003		of causing trouble or looking for help in the classroom so
1004		it's actually to his detriment, you'd want him nearly to be
1005		a bit bolder or wilder... But yeah, especially those kids
1006		where there's a big differential diagnosis piece to do
1007		around DLD and ASD those kids can have more kind of

1008		challenging behaviours and like really reduced attention
1009		for their age.
1010	R	And could you tell me a bit more about how children with
1011		DLD might present similarly to children with ASD?
1012	P3	Yeah I think because we see a lot of kids with ASD who
1013		have a lot of really really delayed language or maybe no
1014		language at the time we start seeing them, like maybe
1015		around the two and a half year mark. Em, and then
1016		obviously because with DLD with the really delayed or
1017		disordered there's a big impact on social skills. So
1018		because ASD is a social communication disorder there
1019		can be a big overall because we're seeing kids who have
1020		really delayed or maybe no language who aren't kind of
1021		interested in their peers, or maybe are interested but don't
1022		know how to kind of initiate interactions with their peers.
1023		And then some of the behaviour and attention difficulties
1024		there can be a big overlap because kids with ASD
1025		oftentimes have kind of sensory needs and they can
1026		manifest as behavioural attentional difficulties. So em,
1027		yeah they'd probably be the biggest areas where they'd
1028		overlap, the language, the delayed or kind of absent
1029		language or the difficulty with social skills, yeah
1030	R	Okay and you had said before about the long term effects
1031		on children with DLD as they're growing older, what
1032		kind of ways might they be impacted?

1033		
1034	P3	So I think in secondary school, there's not, because the
1035		whole curriculum is kind of language loaded and even
1036		now with the new Project Maths that's so language
1037		heavy... Like that girl I was talking about who wants to
1038		be a learning support teacher, you know, she was saying
1039		she's doing Pass Maths but it's Project Maths and she just
1040		finds it like baffling because she can't understand the
1041		question, whereas up to Junior Cert she was quite good at
1042		Maths, like things like Algebra and Trigonometry that
1043		were really concrete she could do that really well. But she
1044		finds Project Maths really hard because it's so language
1045		heavy. So I think it can have a big impact on maybe the
1046		subjects you're able to do in school so even though you
1047		might be interested in something you might not be able to
1048		do it because of the way, I suppose, the way it's taught or
1049		presented in school. So that then has an impact on like
1050		what you do in college, if you choose to go to college,
1051		because I think that's not something that's maybe an
1052		option to people with DLD, whether it's because they
1053		weren't able to do the sufficient subjects maybe to get
1054		into a college course or to get into a university. So I think
1055		trying to navigate the whole school system and trying to
1056		think ahead can be hard and then even things like your
1057		interview skills, like if you're going for an interview for a

1058		job, like how is that going to be impacted by your
1059		language abilities. And if you've practiced some maybe
1060		common questions and then someone asks you a question,
1061		like the same question but asks it a different way in an
1062		interview, like is your language going to be flexible
1063		enough to deal with that? Are you going to understand it?
1064		So I think long term in terms of education and
1065		employment I think there's definitely... You know, I
1066		think that's really challenging and I don't think, and
1067		again it's kind of a developing area, but I don't think we
1068		know a huge amount adults with DLD and kind of what
1069		becomes of them after they leave school and like speech
1070		and language therapy services. Like how do they, kind of,
1071		cope and what are their opportunities for like further
1072		education and employment. And it's like now that we see
1073		SLTs working in the prison system is a big developing
1074		area and there's a huge amount of young offenders who
1075		have language difficulties and that's like, I don't think
1076		that's coincidental
1077	R	Why do you think that might be the case?
1078	P3	Em, I think maybe... Like a sense of frustration, so
1079		maybe, kind of, acting out in a way because they're
1080		frustrated by their language abilities. I think as well
1081		because, you know, teachers have a lack of understanding
1082		so maybe a child isn't doing well in school and they put it

1083		down to the child not trying hard enough, like not being
1084		like smart, in inverted commas. And the child kind of acts
1085		out themselves, maybe decides school isn't for them,
1086		em... And then maybe falls in with a crowd of people
1087		who maybe do accept them. Like I think it's a really
1088		complex issue, but I think it's definitely something we
1089		need to be a lot more aware of. And, you know, like if
1090		you're dealing with a fifteen year old boy who's doing
1091		poorly in school maybe it's not because he's not trying
1092		hard, or he's disinterested or he's just academically
1093		weaker. Maybe he just isn't able to, like, understand
1094		what's going on. So I think that's definitely an area that
1095		we need and hopefully will be a lot more aware of as we,
1096		as kind of, that area is developed a bit further
1097	R	And em, you mentioned there isn't a great understanding
1098		of DLD in the wider community, how do you think
1099		children with DLD might be perceived?
1100	P3	Em, I think a lot of times people just think they're
1101		academically, that they're just, they don't have the same
1102		learning ability or cognitive ability as their peers. I think
1103		people think that maybe they don't try hard enough in
1104		school or that they're bold. I think, and maybe an overlap
1105		of all those things, em yeah so and I think that can be
1106		their teachers and their peers and even maybe parents can
1107		have those misconceptions

1108	R	How does having those conceptions of them then affect
1109		the child?
1110	P3	Yeah I think as we were saying about the kind of self-
1111		esteem, self-worth, she doesn't think I'm able to do this
1112		so why should I even bother trying, that attitude can be
1113		really harmful and really difficult to deal with. And then
1114		if you're just hearing that year after year after year that
1115		can be really challenging. And again if a child doesn't
1116		have like great awareness of their difficulties they're not
1117		able to advocate for themselves. And obviously the
1118		younger you are the harder it is to advocate for yourself.
1119		That girl again, I know I keep bringing her up, but the girl
1120		who has really good insight, her parents pushed and
1121		pushed and pushed for like extra assessments. So her
1122		parents kept pushing for more assessment and additional
1123		support because her teachers were like maybe giving her
1124		additional support for like maths and stuff and she was
1125		like I don't understand what you're asking me to do so
1126		her parents, and she was able to say that to her teachers
1127		and her parents. So she was kind of able to advocate for
1128		herself and then because of that he parents were able to
1129		advocate on her behalf and they kept pushing, cos she
1130		didn't have an SLT assessment until she was around ten,
1131		but she reckons like she said she remembers being in first
1132		class and struggling. So, em yeah, I think having those

1133		misconceptions... Also so frustrating, if you even think
1134		about yourself if someone has heard something about you
1135		that you know isn't true that's very frustrating. Em so I
1136		think it would have a big impact, especially when you're
1137		younger, yeah
1138	R	And what kind of supports then do you think children
1139		with DLD need or would benefit from?
1140	P2	Em well I think the more people know about DLD the
1141		better a child can be supported so like I was saying,
1142		whether it's down to a lack of resources or a lack of
1143		knowledge of DLD within a school I think that can really
1144		kind of shape how a child is going to do in school. I think
1145		like, I think there needs to be a better understanding of
1146		fixing, in inverted commas, a child's language and
1147		working on like how can we, how can we support this
1148		child to participate as fully as they can whether it's
1149		academically or socially or in different, or like at home. A
1150		child with DLD isn't going to have typical language skills
1151		so we need to look at what we can do to help them
1152		compensate for the deficits that they do have. So I think
1153		they do need the support of like obviously their family,
1154		parents, teacher, resource teacher, the SLT, the
1155		Educational Psychologist and then obviously then the
1156		child themselves at the centre of all the decision-making
1157	R	And how does that having that sort of support affect

1158		them?
1159	P3	<p>Em, well I think that can be a lot more supportive, obviously as in if you know that these people want you to do well and are em, understand where your difficulties are coming from and it's not just that you're not trying or you're not bright or clever or whatever that misconception can be. And if you feel then that you're well supported by people that that can, I think maybe that feeling of positivity can encourage you to, em... not want to obviously cos that's not the right term, that makes it sound like it's a lack of motivation that's stopping children and I don't think that's right. Yeah em, I think probably you're just maybe better set up to make, to have better outcomes. Em, even things like your parents bringing you to speech and language therapy and practicing strategies with you at home, like taking the strategy you've done in speech and language therapy and using it when you're doing your homework or whatever. Or feeding that information back to teachers and teachers using that information in school. You know I think it has to be a really collaborative effort that will, like, support a child and help them to make progress</p>
1160	R	Brilliant, so is there anything else you'd like to comment
1161		on in terms of how a child is impacted overall by DLD?
1162	P3	Em, I think the thing I'm becoming a lot more aware of

1163		now is just what happens to these kids when they reach
1164		eighteen and they're discharged from community speech
1165		and language therapy and they leave school, like what's,
1166		what's kind of trajectory for these, for these kids. And
1167		how can we continue to support them like in the
1168		community or in the work place or whatever it might be.
1169		Cos I know in terms of intellectual disability, and a lot of
1170		the time the services aren't there, but I think there is an
1171		effort to help people to transition from like school to the
1172		community or into employment and like, while a child
1173		with DLD might not need the same level of support, I
1174		think like there has to, there should be a better system in
1175		place for them because I think that can probably be very
1176		detrimental to their adult life if there. Yeah that's it I
1177		think
1178	R	Great, thank you

### Interview 4

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1179	R	Okay so how do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
1180	P4	Em... I think that DLD impacts, it depends on the
1181		individual child, they're all going to be different, but it
1182		has the potential to impact across nearly all aspects of
1183		their development. So for example today I was in school
1184		visiting two children with DLD, they're both brothers and
1185		em, for the elder child who's about to go into secondary
1186		school, he has severe language disorder em, a stutter and
1187		some speech difficulties. And em he has day to day
1188		difficulties in terms of accessing what's going on in the
1189		classroom. Em he is getting, he's acutally quite fortunate
1190		in that he's getting resource everyday but he appears to
1191		perceive that himself with stigma. He's very reluctant to
1192		go to resource, he's very reluctant to come to therapy as
1193		he feels it differentiates him. Em... doesn't like to
1194		identify himself as being different and em, his language
1195		disorder seems to have profoundly impacted on how he
1196		sees himself as a person. His own mental health to a
1197		certain extent as well because he does seem to, he doesn't
1198		have a mood disorder but his mood would often be low
1199		and when he's in the clinic or in school. He has, he
1200		hasn't... He gets on fine in class and he's likeable but he
1201		doesn't have very many friends and the friends that he

1202	does have they tend to do mostly like just soccer or
1203	they're not like, they're not doing a lot of actual talking to
1204	one another. I think also it does impact on his family life
1205	as well because despite the best efforts, my best efforts I
1206	think his mum's comprehension of the nature of DLD
1207	isn't the same as mine. Em, so she can be quite hard on
1208	him in sessions and she can, I think, be quite hard on him
1209	when he's struggling with homework and things at home
1210	and maybe could misperceive it as laziness or being
1211	uncooperative rather than actually being so lost and so
1212	behind. And, but then interestingly then his brother also
1213	has severe language disorder and some moderate speech
1214	difficulties but he just seems to have more resilience
1215	generally as a person, so he's currently one of the most
1216	popular children in the class and he's much more willing
1217	to come to therapy and try new things in therapy and so
1218	the impact on his emotional well-being doesn't seem to
1219	be as significant. Now maybe things will change as he
1220	gets to that adolescence where he maybe wants to fit in
1221	more with others and doesn't want to be differentiated.
1222	But em yeah I think they would be very classical
1223	examples of how, how much of an impact... And they're
1234	doing very well, they're getting a lot of support in school
1235	but even with that, despite the fact that it's just, it's
1236	confirmed as just pure DLD and it's not associated with

1237		any other co-occurring conditions they're very like, that
1238		younger child is a year behind in Maths. The older child
1239		is, I think he's two or three classes behind in Maths. Em
1240		and that's basically because of the amount of language
1241		that's involved in the curriculum, it's not... That the
1242		resource teacher would say that when it's broken down
1243		into... Like presented visually or broken down into
1244		language that's at the level that they're at they
1245		demonstrate the cognitive ability to do it. But the amount
1246		of support they need to access that, they can't access it at
1247		the same pace as the rest of the children in the class
1248	R	And you mentioned that the older child, that DLD affects
1249		his mood, would that be something you would see often
1250		in children with DLD?
1251	P4	I think it's very variable, em, the way that it seems to
1252		present with him is more almost not a depression, but like
1253		a sadness, definitely a sadness. And em, I have seen
1254		another of cases, em, particularly where DLD is picked
1255		up quite late, em, and sometimes those cases are coming
1256		to me after they've first presented with self-harming or
1257		suicidal ideation that they go to CAMHS and CAMHS
1258		are actually the first service to discover where you know,
1259		that there's other things going on. And when they
1260		eventually come back to Primary Care they might be in a
1261		better place but there still is, there still is that sadness of

1262		why are things more difficult for me, why are things
1263		harder for me than for my peers. Em, and when you think
1264		of how difficult it is for some of the parents that we work
1265		with to understand their child's difficulties, it must be
1266		extremely difficult to be a child to try to figure out what
1267		DLD is and what it actually is and that it's not that you're
1268		stupid and that you're less of a person. Em, so yeah I
1269		think for some kids I see it impacting in that way and then
1270		for others it's more pronounced, kind of, anxiety,
1271		particularly around like peer interactions. Like quite, I've
1272		never read any research around this or anything, but I
1273		have noticed a pattern, an apparent pattern anyway, where
1274		you'll see a lot of younger kids, kids who are maybe in
1275		the nine to, six to nine years of age, gravitating towards
1276		much younger children to play with or children who have
1277		English as a second language. And I think that that is
1278		often around the I can't keep up with kids of my own age
1279		and I find it easier to be more in control of my anxiety
1280		when I'm with people who are going to have, who are
1281		going to ask less of me language-wise
1282	R	Okay, are there any other ways DLD might impact a child
1283		socially in terms of friendships?
1284	P4	Em, in terms of... Well I think that it changes, it can
1285		change, so apart from like the type of peers that they
1286		might choose as peers, I think it can sometimes change

1287		the nature of how they can interact with their peers. Em
1288		and it can be on much more of a, even if it's a much older
1289		child or an adolescent, it can still be on a very superficial
1290		level that they're perhaps choosing not to engage
1291		because... Engage in more difficult topics of discussion
1292		or share their thoughts and feelings as much because they
1293		maybe don't have the language to talk about those things
1294		themselves or to em, to understand when someone is
1295		sharing that with them, so... And even the inferencing
1296		side of it as well, so if somebody wanted to start a
1297		conversation with them and they might say oh it wasn't a
1298		great day today, if there language was at the level where
1299		they have to keep things quite concrete those kind of
1300		subtleties would be quite hard to actually tease that apart
1301		let alone for them to actually have to explain that
1302		themselves.
1303	R	Okay you've talked about how DLD can manifest in an
1304		adolescent, would you see a big difference between
1305		younger children and older children?
1306	P4	In terms of?
1307	R	In terms of areas of their life that might be impacted by
1308		DLD
1309	P4	Yeah I would, but I think maybe that's because it's the
1310		maturity in terms of awareness of themselves and
1311		awareness of their difficulties so with like a junior infant

1312		or a senior infant coming in they often don't have an
1313		awareness. They love coming into therapy cos it's just
1314		extra games and extra fun and they see it almost as just an
1315		addition to school, like everybody has to learn things,
1316		whereas when adolescents are coming they seem to have
1317		a, whether they're overtly expressing it or their parents
1318		are saying it, they seem to have much more of an
1319		awareness, a hyperawareness of what they can and can't
1320		do. And in most cases with adolescents they can be very
1321		reluctant to engage in therapy and don't want to be
1322		coming out of school or have people ask questions. And
1323		then also they have an awful lot more pressures on them,
1324		like I'm working with a child at the moment who's just in
1325		first year, she's thirteen, and she has DLD and we've
1326		been doing some therapy sessions and she's really
1327		struggling to do her school homework let alone trying to
1328		do anything in between sessions and then like she doesn't
1329		want to come to therapy during the day but she goes to
1330		school so far away that it's really difficult to actually
1331		come in the afternoons. So yeah I think that there is a
1332		difference there
1333	R	You talked about her school work there, what aspects of
1334		school do you think are most difficult for a child with
1335		DLD?
1336	P4	For a child or adolescent?

1337		
1338		
1339		
1340	R	Em, either I suppose
1341	P4	Okay, I think that... Like it's hard, there's so much of the
1342		curriculum that's based on language that I think that most
1343		aspects other than very young P.E kind of stuff that's
1344		going to be devoid of language, that it's going to be okay
1345		for that. But em, like the oral language curriculum is
1346		meant to be kind of integrated throughout kind of primary
1347		school, integrated throughout the day and not seen as a
1348		separate subject and like, that's the reality of it, it isn't...
1349		Like those two boys I spoke about earlier, em like they're
1350		having difficulty across all subjects, like the teacher gave
1351		the example of she's been working with the younger child
1352		on the Normans, that's what the class are doing, and she
1353		said that it's more often, well she said that it's always the
1354		case that they'll be working on something for a number of
1355		weeks and then all the rest of the class has mastered and
1356		that child has still not mastered it but because she has to
1357		address the needs of the whole class she has to move on.
1358		And so they're just, those two boys are just always behind
1359		in everything and then you can see that become more
1360		pronounced with the language load becoming higher and
1361		higher so with the younger child the gap between him and

1362		his peers might be one class academically but for his
1363		brother, who's in sixth class, it's two or three classes and
1364		by the time they're in secondary school where the
1365		language that they need to access like history or like
1366		definitely English, but like nearly all subjects, that's just
1367		so difficult for them. Em and then I think things like the
1368		Leaving Cert Applied can be so much more beneficial
1369		where they have the chance to show what they can do
1370		through group work and project work and they're getting,
1371		like they're attendance counts and that can really be a
1372		positive experience for children with language disorders
1373		but obviously then that means that if they do want to
1374		move on to like third level that limits their options as well
1375	R	Yeah and you're saying that the language load increases
1376		as they progress through school, what kind of long-term
1377		repercussions will this have?
1378	P4	Well say for example I'm thinking of one boy who's just
1379		about to finish with me who's eighteen and he's doing the
1380		Leaving Cert Applied and he's very bright but he chose to
1381		do the Leaving Cert Applied because he struggled so
1382		much with the Junior Cert foundation level. And he
1383		struggled not through lack of trying and not through lack
1384		of smarts it's just basically, it's the written and the oral
1385		language bit. Orally in terms of actually trying to grasp
1386		what's being taught to him and then written in terms of

1387		trying to actually get information written down and
1388		convey it to the instructors. But he has, because he's
1389		chosen to do that he's limited in what he can apply for
1390		and his mum is already worried about his employment
1391		prospects and what's that going to mean for him going
1392		forward and then if he ends up not being able to get a job
1393		or being successful in training for something that he's
1394		actually interested in and what impact that's going to
1395		have on his self-esteem and his mental health and em...
1396		His opportunities to meet people who have similar
1397		interests so yeah em, and obviously then there is a lot of
1398		research which talks about the impact on employability
1399		and the number of people with language difficulties who
1400		are in the prison service and yeah, it's very sad when you
1401		think about it... Particularly when, these are people who
1402		have lots of capabilities and lots of strengths and in a way
1403		it's because our system is so biased towards teaching in
1404		such a language way and assessment in such a language-
1405		based way and that's why their abilities can't be shown
1406	R	Why do you think there might be so many people with
1407		language difficulties in the prison sytem?
1408	P4	Em... Well I guess it is that, it's sort of that chicken and
1409		egg thing, isn't it? Well obviously there's gonna be a
1410		heavy overlay between socioeconomic factors and people
1411		who are more likely and more at risk of being involved in

1412		crime because of their social circumstance and whatnot
1413		and also if you're raised in those sort of conditions the
1414		research would show that right from infancy and being a
1415		toddler like your stimulation and the amount of language
1416		that you have access to is lower than in a different
1417		situation so you don't have the same level of enrichment.
1418		And those early vocabulary things can be a predictor of
1419		later school performance and stuff like that. And of
1420		course if there's literacy difficulties at home that can
1421		mean that even if it's... Even if you don't have dyslexia
1422		or something, someone's not at home to help you with
1423		your reading and so school is harder for you than for
1424		somebody else. And so I think that there's those type of
1425		things that can play into the language difficulties that are
1426		kind of interlinked with some of the socioeconomic stuff.
1427		Em and then there's the fact that lot, well there's the
1428		research that shows that if you do have language
1429		difficulties you're more at risk of emotional difficulties
1430		and behavioural difficulties and you might not feel as
1431		content and supported in school and it might feel more of
1432		a threatening place and so the choices that you make and
1433		the things that you do might end up getting you in trouble
1434		and bringing you into a system that's more about
1435		punishment than rehabilitation so...
1436	R	And could you tell me more about the behavioural

1437		difficulties that a child might be more at risk of?
1438		
1439	P4	Em, I think that that's very much, it's the same as
1440		everything else, where there are some kids where that's
1441		going to present as like behavioural difficulties and then
1442		there'll be some kids for whom that isn't the case. Em so
1443		you would see when there's, particularly in younger kids,
1444		em like if there is a language disorder and they're
1445		experiencing a lot of frustration that you might see a lot
1446		of aggressive behaviour or if they... Sometimes the start
1447		of school can be quite challenging as well where they've
1448		gone from somewhere where maybe they were coping
1449		because there was a familiarity of routine and now there's
1450		a totally new routine and also higher expectations and that
1451		can be a period where you do see a lot of kicking or biting
1452		or hitting out at others or some of the social difficulties
1453		that can lead to some behavioural difficulties. So there
1454		can be some of that kind of thing. And then I suppose if
1455		there is frustration related to your communication
1456		difficulties or related to your, kind of, secondary
1457		education difficulties I'm imagining, I haven't personally
1458		witnessed this but that that can lead to just maybe general
1459		being frustrated and acting out and maybe in dangerous
1460		and violent ways, luckily I haven't had experience in that
1461		though

1462	R	Brilliant and are there any other settings where you might
1463		see a child impacted by DLD?
1464	P4	Where their DLD might affect them or where you might
1465		see a lot more people with DLD?
1466	R	Where their DLD might affect them, we talked about
1467		school-
1468	P4	Well obviously their home as well, I think that again that
1469		very much varies on people's level of understanding. So
1470		some homes can make quite a lot of accommodations and
1471		maybe even just spontaneously or naturally start to reduce
1472		the length of instructions that they give or they might
1473		simplify the language that they use so that a child has
1474		much more of an understanding of what's going on. Or
1475		they might adjust their expectations of what kind of
1476		things they're asking a child to be able to do and say. But
1477		for a family that maybe doesn't have the same level of
1478		understanding or isn't making the same amount of
1479		accommodations em, that would often be where you
1480		would see, particularly in the primary school child,
1481		something like refusal to do homework or in a younger
1482		child maybe kicking and biting and those kind of
1483		aggressive behaviours. Sometimes you'll see school
1484		refusal as well where they're... want to stay at home
1485		because maybe home has less demands on them and they
1486		don't want to go to school and that's not comprehended

1487		in some cases as what the underlying reason is rather than
1488		them being...
1489	R	And what day-to-day activities do you think might be
1490		affected by a child having DLD?
1491	P4	I think mostly everything that they do because
1492		communication is so involved in everything. Like
1493		obviously there'll be some activities that will be less
1494		affected like sports and stuff like that but even as a child
1495		gets older that's going to be impacted as they're talking
1496		about strategies for different team sports or they're
1497		making arrangements of where the match is going to be
1498		and when it's going to be. All those different small types
1499		of things involve language than can quite easily go over
1500		someone's head or that they can't, even if they don't have
1501		comprehension difficulties as such, if they can't have
1502		their voice heard because it's a team sport and em, people
1503		are quite quick to come in and out with what they think
1504		they should do or like that they want the ball passed to
1505		them, blah blah blah... if you're someone with a language
1506		difficulty you might have, just be take you a little bit
1507		more time to formulate that sentence and so you might
1508		miss out on participating as much even in those type of
1509		activities that don't have as much language. But there's
1510		pretty few like things that don't involve language. And
1511		like particularly when you think of, like, how much kids

1512		socialise now using phones and stuff, like that's, you
1513		can... It's quite obvious when a child has language
1514		difficulties and they're trying to, like, write a message,
1515		and it's so apparent in the message that between their
1516		spelling and their grammar, and then they're not even fact
1517		to face so it's really difficult for the message to just
1518		literally get lost in translation. So yeah I just think, and
1519		between just going to the shop and asking for things and
1520		making sure that, being able to actually ask a question or
1521		even basic things like that, like I just think it really affects
1522		pretty much every aspect of their life.
1523	R	And with technology then, aside from sending messgaes,
1524		how do you think the rise in technology might affect
1525		children with DLD now versus before?
1526	P4	Well I think in some ways it's positive, like if they're
1527		able to access em like there's some nice resources and
1528		YouTube videos so they can see other people in similar
1529		positions and maybe, depending on the child they might
1530		actually use technology as a tool to actually connect with
1531		others and feel less isolated and to get some actual real
1532		information about it, as opposed to ideas they might just
1533		have their head, ideas not based off anything. But then
1534		obviously for others, as for most kids at the moment,
1535		social media and technology can also be used for bullying
1536		and if you're someone who's experiencing bullying for

1537		your communication difficulties that means that they're
1538		going home and not just experiencing bullying in the
1539		school or in the sports club or wherever it is but they're
1540		now a target at home as well, so it has its pros and cons
1541		
1542	R	So would you see children with DLD being bullied more
1543		or about the same amount as children with typical
1544		language skills?
1545	P4	I mean I'm quite biased in that I don't have kids so I only
1546		see the kids with language disorders so I think that, like
1547		from the literature they're more at risk than a typically
1548		developing child. Whether or not they're more at risk
1549		than another sort of challenge or disability, I don't know.
1550		But I think anything that makes you stand out or makes it
1551		harder to defend yourself is going to make you more of a
1552		target and that is essentially what DLD is, so
1553	R	What do you think is the wider understanding of DLD
1554		and how it impacts a child?
1555	P4	I don't think there's any wider understanding of it. Like I
1556		think it's really, I don't think people have... It's not even
1557		at a level of recognition let alone awareness or
1558		understanding. I think that you're only going to have
1559		heard of it if you're directly affected by it and even then
1560		you may or may not have an understanding of it. Some
1561		people, even whose child has it, still see it as a delay or

1562		something small, but I don't think there is even general
1563		recognition of the term in society at all
1564	R	And how does that affect children with DLD?
1565	P4	I think that that's em, one of the biggest parts of the
1566		problem is actually having people recognise that it's not
1567		this, that it's not that they're lazy or that they're stupid or
1568		that they're all these other things that people can
1569		misconstrue them as, em.... Yeah, some of the social and
1570		emotional stuff ,it's stemming from the wider society's
1571		understanding of it rather than... Well some of it is
1572		obviously coming from the child themselves but I think if
1573		there was more appreciation and understanding and
1574		accommodations made in the world in general I wonder
1575		would there be as much of an impact on someone's self-
1576		esteem or their ability to make friends and just feel good
1577		about themselves
1578	R	So how do you think children with DLD might be
1579		perceived by other people?
1580	P4	I think quite often they are perceived as not being that
1581		bright or in the case of children where it manifests
1582		behaviourally as just being bold. Like I think unless it's a
1583		speech disorder where it's obvious to the ear that there's
1584		difficulties they're... They're very unlikely to be
1585		perceived as that it's to do with their language only and
1586		not their overall cognitive functioning

1587	R	Okay and are there any other areas of child's life that you
1588		think might be impacted, or anything else you'd like to
1589		add?
1590	P4	Em I don't think so. Well I suppose it just, it does affect
1591		everything. Even their physical health, like as well, like if
1592		they're, if they are experiencing a pain or feeling
1593		something that's not, feeling not the way that they...
1594		Feeling not right, even at that point they might not have
1595		the language to articulate that so even at the level of basic
1596		needs, em it can be just much more challenging. Or trying
1597		to toilet train a child who has language difficulties and
1598		may go on to have a diagnosis of DLD, like even those
1599		type of tasks are just harder for them. So I just think that,
1600		given that it's something that until recently we've been
1601		quite, em keen to say it only affects their language and it
1602		doesn't affect any other aspect of their develop, not their
1603		development but any other aspect of their cognition. That
1604		is the case, but it affects every other aspect of who they
1605		are and how they are in the world, like, and how they're
1606		treated
1607	R	And just say on the toilet training being harder, how
1608		might that then impact the parent?
1609	P4	Yeah well parents can react to that by being more anxious
1610		and more stressed or perceiving the child negatively,
1611		that's rare enough though, usually at that age they're

1612		quite sympathetic, but just even being much more worried
1613		about how they're going to get on. And you'd often, that
1614		is very often the experience I've had, you'll have a parent
1615		sitting in front of you with a child with a language
1616		disorder and they might be four or five and a parent is
1617		asking you should I send them to school because they're
1618		so concerned about them. And they're so worried and
1619		anxious for them because they know how hard it's going
1620		to be and they're not wrong
1621	R	Okay, and is there anything else you'd like to comment
1622		on?
1623	P4	No that's it I think

### Interview 5

<b>Line</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Data</b>
1624	R	So how do you think DLD impacts a child's life?
1625	P5	Em I think DLD has a really profound impact on a child's life
1626		depending obviously on the severity of their DLD but in most
1627		cases DLD tends to be quite severe especially maybe in the age
1628		groups from kind of preschool years up until kind of nine, ten, I
1629		think once kids kind of hit the older years in primary school it
1630		can kind of change a little bit in how it impacts but definitely in
1631		the younger years a child who has very severe DLD, em, I think
1632		it impacts all areas of their life, em. So areas that would come to
1633		mind for me that it would impact, em, would be obviously
1634		academic, em, progress, em, a lot of children are failing school in
1635		the earlier years in primary school and I think sometimes children
1636		can have a very good insight into the fact that they're different
1636		from their peers, to the fact that they're finding it really really
1637		hard in school and then that kind of off sets a whole other area of
1638		difficulties for them, so that in turn can lead to difficulties in
1639		emotional regulation, for instance. A child might be quite what
1640		we would call behaviourally disruptive in a classroom setting but
1641		the reason for that is maybe that they're coming from a place of
1642		frustration where they're not understanding what's going on,
1643		they're aware that they're behind. Similar at home as well maybe
1644		in their home environment where things are challenging for them

1645		in that they don't understand what their parents are asking them
1646		to do. At the same time then you can have a child who isn't very
1647		resilient as well as maybe having difficulties controlling their
1648		emotional regulation. A child who isn't resilient will maybe lack
1649		confidence or lash out behavioural wise, em. I think from an
1650		independence point of view kids can really struggle with you
1651		know remembering steps in basic everyday functions like getting
1652		dressed, em, organising themselves and their belongings and their
1653		everyday life and I suppose that also stems from kids with DLD
1654		tend to also have huge difficulties with problem solving and even
1655		kind of when they make up ground in kind of the basic language
1656		skills that kind of area of abstract language can still really affect
1657		their everyday functioning in their life and that's kind of what I
1658		meant with as they get older it's those kind of difficulties that
1659		kind of become much more apparent than when they're younger.
1660		I suppose it affects kids' attention and listening and you know if
1661		you can't attend, listening and attention is the basis for
1662		everything that we kind of do, well then you're going to probably
1663		miss out on a lot of I suppose information in academic settings
1664		but also maybe in your peer group, I suppose for kids they have
1665		difficulty with social interactions a lot of the time as well because
1666		they don't pick up on the social cues, either language that people
1667		are using or they're usually not very good detectives either at
1668		picking up on body language or nonverbal communication, em.
1669		And I suppose as well depending on how a child's parent

1670		understands their diagnosis and what the impact of DLD actually
1671		is for their child in their kind of environmental circle it can
1672		sometimes lead to quite a negative parent-child interaction or
1673		frustrated parent-child interaction or actually a very dependent
1674		parent-child interaction where, you know, a child isn't being
1675		given the chance to be independent because they have this
1676		diagnosis of DLD
1677	R	Could you tell me a bit more about the academic or education
1678		difficulties that you mentioned?
1679	P5	Yeah so I suppose I'm probably coming at it from a very
1680		personal perspective in that I'm based in school kind of setting,
1681		em, and I work kind of regularly with kids with DLD. So
1682		academic challenges that children with DLD tend to have, em, I
1683		suppose language number one, kind of understanding of language
1684		so being able to follow directions, instructions, being able to
1685		learn meaning words like concepts, remembering what's been
1686		said to them, either in an immediate moment or in terms of topic
1687		teaching which a lot of teachers do you might have a different
1688		topic every month but usually kids won't remember the vocab
1689		from day to day kind of learning, you really need to have a lot of
1690		repetition for them to remember it. I suppose the kind of
1691		understanding side of language really comes into all the other
1692		subjects that are on the curriculum, em, so science, geography,
1693		maths especially language in the maths subject or even the
1694		concept of numbers, adding, taking away, even though they're

1695		not language-based concepts because they're concepts and they
1696		involve understanding that can really affect a child's I suppose
1697		numeracy attainments. Research would show that there is a big
1698		correlation between a child's oral language system and kind of
1699		literacy and that if there are difficulties in one then there are
1700		going to be difficulties usually in the other. Things and trends
1701		that I would notice again are sometimes you will get a child who
1702		is quite good at decoding, em, so they've kind of learned the
1703		phonics and they're very good at kind of decoding for reading
1704		but they've absolutely no idea what they're reading so they're not
1705		reading for meaning, they're just reading rote. And then on the
1706		flip side of that you could a child with DLD who is really
1707		struggling with acquiring phonics and actually has difficulty with
1708		the decoding side of it and again it's kind of the same thing, they
1709		can't decode it to access the meaning so both kind of profiles
1710		you're really affected from learning through literacy and learning
1711		that medium in the classroom. I suppose other academic
1712		attainments that children are kind of expected to learn can be
1713		very much on the social side of things. There's different
1714		curriculums out there, there's kind of learn together programmes
1715		which are kind of about understanding the world around you, em,
1716		kind of problem solving skills, em, and learning to you know,
1717		interact appropriately with your peers, so kind of being a good
1718		friend, learning sharing, turn-taking, being able to be a good
1719		problem solver in a social situation and again I think that a lot of

1720		children with DLD don't have that kind of natural... not natural
1721		ability but it's almost kind of like you have to help them untangle
1722		what it is to problem solve, what they need to look for, how to
1723		put clues together to get an answer, em. So I suppose from that
1724		point of view it can really affect a child's not only their academic
1725		performance among all the curriculum subjects but then also
1726		they're subjects that are more to do with social skills or abstract
1727		problem solving, reasoning, developing those skills, that type of
1728		thinking.
1729	R	Would there be particular subjects you would generally think
1730		would be easier or harder for children with DLD?
1731	P5	Em, children with DLD tend to respond to subjects that are quite
1732		visual. Again a trend can be that actually kids with DLD might
1733		have a relative strength in maths but while maths stays relatively
1734		number-based when maths kind of switches over to being more
1735		language-based, which happens as the curriculum progresses and
1736		they get older, their difficulties can start creeping into that
1737		subject a bit more than it would have in the past. Some kids with
1738		DLD are very creative, very artistic so maybe kind of more
1739		practical-based subjects can be really I suppose beneficial for a
1740		child with DLD cos they're visual learners typically. Also maybe
1741		subjects that bring in music could be a nice way in that aid kind
1742		of memory and retention. But I suppose it just depends on the, on
1743		the child. Em, I suppose literacy, language learning would be the
1744		two biggest areas that I would see affected in a negative way by

1745	DLD but I suppose giving the child with DLD the opportunity to
1746	be a leader in a certain area of the curriculum is important as well
1747	so for example some of the kids that I work with there's certain
1748	committees in the school. So one child is on the student council
1749	as is the representative for their class for the student council so
1750	everytime there's a student council meeting that child comes
1751	back and gives the message and one of that child's main goals is
1752	to work on em you know using their voice and putting sentences
1753	together with good clarity in front of peers, that's one of that
1754	child's overall goals so you know that child is on that committee.
1755	Another child is on the Green Schools committee which means
1756	again they're involved in doing bits and pieces around the school
1757	in the garden and then reporting back to the class on what's
1758	happening and there's usually special events throughout the
1759	school year related to those committees. Em, another child for
1760	example is the active schools leader so that child is responsible
1761	for reminding the teacher to have an active break everyday and
1762	they have a role in ticking off it on the sheet and things like that
1763	so I think subjects that you can, where you can give a child a
1764	sense of responsibility in order to build their independence from
1765	very early on is really important so from minding their
1766	belongings in the classroom to organising themselves for lunch.
1767	And in terms of academic subjects I suppose subjects that lend
1768	themselves a bit more to that would be maybe like em, geography
1769	or science where there's concrete, definite step-by-step

1770		procedures or history. So even though there's a lot of language in
1771		those subjects, kids with DLD might actually be able to access
1772		those subjects a bit easier because there's definite steps, there's
1773		usually visuals attached with them and it's maybe not as heavy
1774		on literacy or on language learning as maybe English can be or
1775		Irish can be or obviously French because they're all languages.
1776		Em, so I suppose what I'm trying to say are subjects that I think
1778		would be easier for a child with DLD are subjects where there is
1779		a practical application to complement the language load and
1780		there's more of a visual load as well. I think those type of
1781		subjects are, em, easier for you know a child with DLD
1782	R	And you mentioned how the change in the curriculum as a child
1783		gets older can have an impact, could you tell me a bit more about
1784		that?
1785	P5	Yeah, em, so... I suppose when children are in preschool you
1786		know obviously it's very play-based and then they make the
1787		move to primary school where in junior and senior infants you
1788		have the Aiste curriculum where again is quite play-based and is
1789		quite child-friendly in that manner but em once you kind of hit
1790		first class there is a big jump with what kids are expected to be
1791		able to do from a literacy point of view, a numeracy point of
1792		view and a language function point of view. And also bearing in
1793		mind that at that age as well technically your verbal reasoning
1794		skills should be pretty much well developed if not fully
1795		developed appropriately for that age. I suppose for children as

1796	they get older and the curriculum changes em, I suppose the
1797	jumps just get bigger and bigger in terms of the amount of
1798	information a child is expected to remember. A child may still
1799	have gaps in some of the basic kind of vocabulary categories let's
1800	say for example that you would be expected to know at first
1801	class/senior infant level em and if those gaps are still there at an
1802	older age then it's much harder for you to, it's almost like there's
1803	nothing for you to latch your information onto, so how can you
1804	learn the more complex more abstract language when you get
1805	older. Em, I suppose in the primary school setting obviously the
1806	subjects get more advanced in terms of maths and the view is to
1807	prepare a child for secondary school where a child is expected to
1808	be much more independent within that school setting. So I
1809	suppose when I say curriculum in school gets harder when a
1810	child gets older I also mean how the curriculum is delivered gets
1811	much harder for a child with DLD to navigate or manage unless
1812	they have built up good organisational skills. So I suppose in a
1813	primary school setting you're in the one class, it's the one teacher
1814	and it's easy for the teacher to, well it's not easy but it's easier,
1815	for a teacher to differentiate a curriculum at maybe a fifth and
1816	sixth class level but once you hit em secondary school even
1817	though you might be in streamed classes, you know, the teacher
1818	isn't going to differentiate the curriculum for your level, you're
1819	just going to have to go in and learn what they're teaching and if
1820	that's really hard for you or moving at too fast a pace for you,

1821		you know, there's kind of no one, there's not the same support
1822		that there was at primary level at secondary level. Also on top of
1823		that a child has to contend with moving around classrooms,
1824		reading a time table, organising their locker, organising their bag,
1825		remembering what homework to do, writing homework down.
1826		And I suppose unless that's practiced with them at a primary
1827		school level somewhat before they go in a child can struggle very
1828		fast in secondary school. And I think just the volume of
1829		information that a child is expected to learn and the pace at which
1830		they're expected to learn gets much faster as the curriculum
1831		moves on and I think children with DLD really struggle with that
1832		because we know what benefits children with DLD is maybe a
1833		slower pace in order to revise a topic a few times in order for
1834		them to be able to retain the information and process it and then
1835		use it.
1836	R	Okay, and you'd said before about some social difficulties that
1837		can arise, could you tell me more about that?
1838	P5	Em, yeah so again I suppose it can be, it can range, I'm just
1839		thinking about all the different children that I've seen with DLD
1840		over the years and I suppose it really does depend on their own
1841		personal circle, how severe their DLD is as well but I suppose by
1842		the nature of it DLD does place a child at a higher risk of having
1843		social skills difficulties because I suppose language is a way of
1844		just communication you know it's a system of making your
1845		thoughts known but also non-verbal communication essentially

1846	has the same role in expressing meaning and if your system isn't
1847	maybe good at picking up cues in language it also may not be
1848	good at picking up on cues in body language. For some kids that
1849	is actually their strength and they're not quite, they might not be
1850	good at problems solving verbally but they can kind of read a
1851	situation quite well whereas a child with DLD you know
1852	stereotypically speaking can struggle with both areas of
1853	communication, verbal and non-verbal. I suppose what that
1854	means is that in a social situation they may not pick up on a
1855	certain cue that someone is annoyed with them until maybe it's
1856	too late. Em I suppose they might misinterpret something that
1857	someone has done to them, say in the yard someone might bump
1858	into them by accident but they might think they've done it on
1859	purpose and that can end up in a bit of a kerfuffle or challenging
1860	situation for the child. I think as well that whole area of verbal
1861	reasoning or just reasoning and one of the strategies we teach
1862	kids is being a detective, looking for clues and I find it so
1863	interesting sometimes in therapy that a child with DLD, you
1864	know, to you looking at a picture the clue is there, it's on the
1865	page and just because they're listening out for the language
1866	they're maybe thrown off by a kind of a distractor clue in the
1867	picture and they'll rationale it and reason it and actually to them
1868	it makes sense but actually it doesn't make any sense in kind of
1870	reality. And I think that be, have really negative consequences on
1871	their ability to interact with their peers because em, I suppose

1872	what I'm trying to say is children with DLD generally aren't
1873	good problem solvers even though like I was saying before that
1874	kind of idea of logical thinking, breaking things down into steps,
1875	very often kids with DLD need that done for them and they need
1876	to learn it in those steps, they can't problem solve it themselves
1877	that maybe another kid without DLD might be able to after being
1878	exposed to a few different types of experiences where they would
1879	have had to do the same thing. Em, and I think maybe even
1880	understanding language that their peers are using with them in
1881	social interactions can be a big maybe part of where
1882	communication breaks down because a child who is aged seven
1883	might be interacting with another seven year old but a child with
1884	DLD maybe their language might be more like a four year old, or
1885	a three year old so their language is much less developed and
1886	probably their understanding and their ability to express their
1887	thoughts is much less developed than their peer. And often as
1888	well in early development like your play skills and your language
1889	skills are so correlated and kind of move at the same time that
1890	sometimes a child's language can be really delayed but then also
1891	they're play can be really delayed because of that. And I would
1892	have seen that as well with a few kids with DLD where they're
1893	kind of interested in things that would be kind of maybe
1894	classified as younger than them and maybe their peers have
1895	moved on and they can't keep up with their peers in that respect
1896	and maybe gravitate towards younger children to play with. But

1897		em, learning the rules of social interaction can be tricky as well
1898		for kids with DLD, again because it's not obvious and it's
1899		abstract. Again that idea of the hidden curriculum that exists for
1900		kids who have social interaction difficulties but the social kind of
1901		interaction curriculum is hidden for everyone and so the rules
1902		aren't obvious em so children with DLD tend to do better with
1903		facts or things that are concrete so anything that's abstract like
1904		social interaction skills can just be more challenging and can just
1905		result in maybe more disagreements with peers or even parents
1906		and just not understanding what someone is saying to them so
1907		being mindful of that and where a child's understanding is is
1908		really important as well.
1909	R	And are there particular social situations that might be more
1910		difficult for them or might be easier for them?
1911	P5	Em I think a social situation maybe where it's an adult and a
1912		child would be easier for a child with DLD because adults tend to
1913		be more sympathetic in terms of, you know, communication
1914		partner if you're interacting with a child as an adult you will try
1915		to change your interaction as much as you can to support that
1916		child particularly if you're in a teaching role, very often if you're
1917		in a parental role or if you understand that that child has
1918		difficulty in a certain area. Or even talking to a child an adult will
1919		kind of pick up on that maybe more so than a child so I think
1920		maybe interacting with adults can maybe sometimes be easier for
1921		kids with DLD. Sometimes it can be harder them though

1922		especially if it is a parent maybe where there's a negative
1923		interaction cycle, I think sometimes that can be a challenging
1924		situation for a child with DLD cos maybe they're going in there
1925		with certain pre-conceived ideas around what usually happens
1926		around things and that can kind of result in quite a fast outburst
1927		maybe that is tricky for the parent to manage. I think in terms of
1928		interactions where it's one on one, again maybe with a peer
1929		who's around the same age as them but is familiar with the child
1930		with DLD and maybe knows them well, those interactions are
1931		probably easier for a child with DLD to navigate because if
1932		they're a familiar play partner then they usually have their usual
1933		routines, they enjoy what they have together and someone who's
1934		your friend just kind of has that acceptance and just accepts you
1935		for who you are which I think is a really lovely thing for kid with
1936		DLD to have close friends that way. A group situation is
1937		definitely probably more challenging for a child with DLD
1938		because it's probably going to move at a faster pace than maybe
1939		one on one, there's going to be different conversational turns
1940		happening where you have to tune into people's language,
1941		process it and then try to jump in to take your turn. So I think a
1942		child with DLD could probably get lost in a group quite easily in
1943		comparison to one on one interactions.
1944	R	And what would a negative interaction cycle be?
1945	P5	With a parent is it, or?
1946	R	Yeah, what you said-

1947	P5	Yeah yeah, I suppose what I meant by that is em, probably going
1948		back to your first question of how does DLD impact a child em, I
1949		think it can significantly impact on a child's overall everyday
1950		functioning within all aspects of their life that they do and kind of
1951		what I meant by that is that a parent of a child with DLD,
1952		because genetics can be a factor, and kind of what I said about a
1953		parents' own understanding of DLD and they may have DLD
1954		themselves but sometimes maybe a parents doesn't have or
1955		hasn't been made aware of some of the skills or strategies that
1956		could help their child particularly if their child is more, may have
1957		difficulties with emotional regulation or low confidence or low
1958		resilience and I think maybe what can happen there is that over
1959		the years maybe through a child not understanding that they're
1960		not allowed do something em, or different scenarios happening
1961		maybe where they've done something and not meant it, they've
1962		done something they weren't supposed to do but they didn't
1963		understand what was going on but they understood that there was
1964		a consequence for it and maybe unfortunately that consequence
1965		was quite negative for them so em, and then child remembers that
1966		so I suppose what I'm really meaning there is parenting and it
1967		goes back to the parent-child relationship. Em some children with
1968	DLD can be very black and white thinkers because obviously the	
1969	world is easier to understand when it's black and white compared	
1970	to lots of shades of grey, em so very often children will say 'oh	
1971	am I good or am I bold' because that's what they've picked up on	

1972		maybe from interactions with adults in their life, it could be a
1973		parent, it could be a teacher, it could a grandparent, an aunt, an
1974		uncle, a babysitter, whoever and they kind of really pick up on
1975		that idea of right-wrong, good-bad, and em that can really affect
1976		a child's confidence so it's kind of like almost going into every
1977		interaction they're almost expecting the worst, that's sort of what
1978		I mean by kind of a negative pattern of interaction em maybe
1979		where both parties are frustrated because maybe behind the
1980		parents' frustration you have maybe not understanding fully
1981		what's going on for their child, worry anxiety, you know
1982		emotions and then a very busy lifestyle or different demands on
1983		their everyday life and that's kind of where the parent is coming
1984		from. And then on the other hand you have the child who has a
1985		diagnosis of DLD who's trying to understand the world around
1986		them where it's very hard to understand the world around you
1987		because everything is through language and you find language
1988		really hard and you've different adults telling you things
1989		everyday do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that, oh you
1990		were bold today, you did this, you shouldn't have hit your friend.
1991		So I think both perspective can be quite challenging and can be
1992		stressful for both parties involved and I think I have
1993		unfortunately seen some families maybe get into a negative
1994		pattern where you know they need intervention, they need
1995		support and the child needs work around kind of self-identity,
1996		building their resilience, helping them realise they're strengths

1996		and on the flip side the parent also then needs the support around
1997		maybe the behavioural management side if there's behavioural
1998		stuff going on around how to try promote resilience at home and
1999		to help their child to be as independent and as resilient a person
2000		as they can be for life going forward
2001	R	Could you tell me a bit more about the resilience piece that you
2002		might see with a child with DLD?
2003	P5	Em I think it does really depend on the child and the home
2004		environment that they've come from and maybe services they've
2005		accessed to date or supports they've accessed to date or again as I
2006		mentioned a parental understanding of what the diagnosis is and I
2007		suppose for me I would kind of see two almost strands to
2008		resilient- resilience. Resilience to me means, you know, having
2009		self-confidence, being able to identify your strengths, knowing
2010		and being accepting that some things are hard for you and that
2011		you're just going to keep trying even if it's hard you keep trying
2012		and you do your best and you look, ask for help when you need
2013		it. But also that maybe when things are really hard that you don't
2014		have that attitude of kind of oh my god this is way too hard, I'm
2015		just going to give up and walk away, that you're able to stick
2016		through it and that if somebody says something kind of mean to
2017		you on a peer level you're able to turn around and kind of say,
2018		you know, well my teacher says that I'm really artistic, or really
2019		kind so it doesn't matter that you're saying to me that I can't run
2020		very fast. You know that they this kind of little book in their head

2021	that they can access so they can say okay, I know I'm not so
2022	good and this and somebody is saying that I'm not so good at this
2023	but that kind of piece of work has been done that they can fall
2024	back on and say hmm, that's not really that much of a big
2025	problem to me because I know that I'm good at all these other
2026	things, grand. So that's one side resilience for me. So em, another
2027	side of resilience would be being independent which I know
2028	sounds a bit odd but if you're not independent in anything how
2029	you can you be resilient if you're dependent on everyone else to
2030	do it for you, it's this vicious cycle, you know, you're not
2031	teaching a child to take responsibility to organise themselves
2032	you're kind of saying lean on all these other people to do it for
2033	you and kind of what message is that sending to a child? It's
2034	telling them that they can't do it, it's telling them that they can't
2035	do it without any help that they'll never be able to achieve that
2036	maybe they might see peers around them doing it for themselves.
2037	So I suppose for me those two are kind of tied together em but I
2038	suppose kids' resilience is really important going forward in life
2039	because you don't know what life is going to throw at you and
2040	you need coping strategies to cope with difficult situations and
2041	we know that children with DLD maybe don't necessarily pick
2042	up on kind of abstract coping strategies that they might observe
2043	someone else do and they might need those strategies taught to
2044	them specifically to give them that kind of map of when things
2045	get hard, this is what you do. When you feel like this, this is what

2046	you should do, this is a good idea. Em, and yeah I suppose as
2047	well resilience is really important for a child with DLD to know
2048	what they're good at, because for a child with DLD, are certain
2049	things going to be off limits for them when they get older?
2050	Probably. Are things going to be a little bit harder to navigate?
2051	Probably, in social interactions, maybe in the jobs front so being
2052	aware of your strengths and weaknesses from very, well an
2053	appropriately early age is really good for kids to be able to say
2054	yeah that's something that I find hard and I have to work hard at
2055	that but this is something that I'm really good at and I'm gonna
2056	put my time and effort into this as well and maybe have that
2057	balanced perspective of themselves. And sorry what I was going
2058	to say a minute ago but I think I lost my train of thought but, em,
2059	if children aren't resilient that's kind of when there can be a
2060	knock-on effect on self-confidence. At certain ages, particularly
2061	around age seven-eight your self-identity kicks in so if you have
2062	low confidence you might not have a great self-identity which
2063	then may lead to maybe other difficulties in your life, so for
2064	example, behavioural outbursts, difficulties with emotional
2065	regulation, you may be anxious. It may manifest as lots of
2066	different things – opting out, cutting yourself off from a peer
2067	group if you opt out of everyday activities. Em, in a school
2068	setting a child saying no to everything they're asked to do can
2069	obviously end up with behavioural reprimands. Em, if a child
2070	feels very low self-confidence because maybe they're not

2071	resilience to just have another go and keep trying, okay you
2072	didn't get it this time and kind of take on that feedback that
2073	they're getting which is positive feedback but obviously it's with
2074	a view to obviously helping them learn something then it can,
2075	I've seen it really affect a child's ability just to control their
2076	emotions on the spot and it kind of spirals into this big maybe
2077	problem in the school where maybe parents have to be called in
2078	and there's a really significant negative consequence that maybe
2079	didn't need to go that far. Em, and you know, for kids as well it
2080	can, low resilience can affect their own interactions with parents,
2081	they might have a very negative view of some of the things that
2082	they do in their day-to-day activities because they've been told
2083	that they're not good at it or it hasn't worked out for them. Em
2084	which again might exclude them from interacting in opportunities
2085	that they might actually enjoy if they were just sort of pushed a
2086	bit more to just keep going with it. So that's kind of what I
2087	meant, if that answers the question about resilience I think it's
2088	resilience and independence, is so important for a child with
2089	DLD because if you're teaching them those things then you're
2090	teaching them to be dependent on everyone in their, as they get
2091	older, teaching them to be dependent on everyone in their
2092	environment which then when they're an adult you know they
2093	might find one that there's no one around them or a lot of those
2094	people have disappeared and they're on their own and they just
2095	don't know how to navigate the world around them. So I think

2096		teaching them to be independent, organised and I supposed
2097		resilient in that little bubble altogether is crucial because you're
2098		giving kids skills for life if you do that for them, especially for a
2099		child with DLD
2100	R	And would you often see a difference in kind of independence
2102		skills of a child with DLD versus a child with typical language
2103		skills?
2104	P5	Em, yes. Em, I think sometimes just may what we, what you
2105		would consider kind of basic in inverted commas skills of
2106		independence or organisation for a child without a language
2107		disorder or DLD in particular. Em, now whether it's the DLD or
2108		whether it's the environment around them and the DLD diagnosis
2109		has kind of prevented people around them from pushing them to
2110		be independent, be organised, you know, there's probably an
2111		element of that I think sometimes as well for a child with DLD. I
2112		think because the diagnosis is so unheard of, historically,
2113		obviously the term has changed recently, but I think there's not a
2114		lot of awareness out there about DLD, em so I think parents
2115		sometimes and people around a child with DLD aren't really sure
2116		sometimes what they can and can't do so maybe assumed they
2117		can't do anything or don't necessarily push them in areas that
2118		you might push a child without a language disorder or DLD. Em,
2119		so I suppose trends that you tend to see with kids with DLD are
2120		just lack of organisation of themselves, and you know that might
2121		be if you give them an instruction of em okay can you get up and

2122	get your lunch, it might be that the child gets up from their desk
2123	kind of throws back their chair, maybe hits someone else if
2134	there's someone standing behind them and have no awareness
2135	that there's someone behind them, throw the chair back, run
2136	down to the back of the classroom, grab their lunchbox, might
2137	spill a few things along the way and then come back. But kind of
2138	they didn't really have a plan, they just sort of heard it and flew
2139	off, whereas if they actually stopped and thought about it then
2140	they might actually stand up in a more slower manner, push their
2141	chair in, walk to the back of the classroom, get their lunchbox,
2142	come back to their desk. And it's that kind of planning, even
2143	though that sounds a bit more like a dyspraxia, I do see it in kids
2144	with DLD, where they just don't have that logical step-by-step
2145	planning. You know, step-by-step processes, they need to be
2146	taught those steps. And then as they get older because sort of
2147	think oh we'll just do it for them because maybe the language is,
2148	they think the language is too hard for them to understand, or
2149	they didn't get it the first time like a child without DLD, so they
2150	obviously can't do it, when actually they might just need a few
2151	more repetitions or also as well sometimes it's just faster to do it
2152	for the child with DLD because it's that kind of attitude of oh
2153	they're going to find it hard anyway I may as well just do it cos I
2154	have to get them out of the house, or I have to get them out to the
2155	yard and we just have to go so you know, we don't have time for
2156	them to do it at a slower pace than maybe a child without DLD

2157		might. Now having said that I have met children with DLD
2158		where again the support system around them has been different
2159		and has been quite proactive and those kids have been taught to
2160		be independent in those areas. But usually the independence side
2161		can be things like dressing, feeding, em, dressing, feeding, self-
2162		organisation of like materials, school books, bags, all those things
2163		like getting their coat, putting their coat on before they get to
2164		yard not just running out to yard, just kind of stopping and
2165		thinking and then getting a plan in place and then going, that just
2165		doesn't sometimes come very naturally to a child with DLD
2166		Okay and you had talked a bit early about emotional regulation,
2167		could you talk a bit about how that might present in a child with
2168		DLD?
2169		Em I think there has been, have been a lot of studies done on
2170		emotional regulation linked with DLD em. I think the nature of
2171		DLD, because everything is done through language and
2172		communication so if that's one area that's really hard for you, I
2173		think that's sometimes something that can be quite isolating for
2174		the child or for an adult with DLD. Em, because everyone around
2175		you just seems to get it and you're just kind of struggling em. I
2176		suppose difficulties I would have seen over the years with kids
2177		with DLD and emotional regulation, there's a few different
2178		profiles. I suppose is of the child who is very much aware of their
2179		DLD, and that mixed in maybe with their natural personality they
2180		just don't have any coping strategies to regulate their emotions

2182		and so underneath it all because they're so aware that they find
2183		things hard they might be quite anxious, low confidence, upset,
2184		frustrated, angry and that can manifest as poor behaviour across a
2184		lot of different settings. You know that kind of stereotypical oh
2185		they're bold or they're a handful in school, they're always
2186		lashing out at peers, but actually is it because they just have no
2187		other way to express themselves because language is really hard
2188		and they haven't figured out how to do that yet. Em, you can also
2189		have a child with DLD who again is quite anxious underneath the
2190		surface but it doesn't quite bubble up into anger and frustration
2191		like it might for one child on the surface. They kind of are very
2192		introverted and it sort of stays in and that in itself is very negative
2193		as well because sometimes you know they might kind of exclude
2194		themselves quietly from activities or not push themselves in
2195		certain areas, which again, you know, that's real anxiety and sort
2196		of difficulties for kids. And I think eh, kind of another profile is
2197		that that anxiety can kind of manifest in another way so on the
2198		surface a child might be quite confident and maybe have learned
2199		off quite a few phrases and maybe comes across as quite a good
2200		communicator and is kind of clued in that way. But maybe the
2201		anxiety around their communication is coming out in different
2202		ways, so for some kids it could be fluency for other kids it could
2203		be food, where actually they're using food, and I would have
2204		seen that in like an eight-nine year old where food was sort of
2205		their way of expressing themselves and dealing with the anxiety

2206		around their communication. Em to the point where they had
2207		quite a negative relationship with food. So I suppose there is a
2208		high correlation of, you know, social and emotional kind of
2209		regulation difficulties in DLD and there are lots of studies on that
2210		as I think I mentioned before, but it's really how it manifests for
2211		the child in question and it can be different but at the end of the
2212		day a lot of those, even though how it's manifesting is different,
2213		all of them can kind of lead to maybe more I suppose, a poor
2214		level of mental health. And that's the danger I suppose, you don't
2215		want them to get to that level, you want to put interventions in
2216		place where you teach them to manage their emotions effectively
2217		so that they're not maybe diagnosed with anxiety as adults or that
2218		they have coping strategies to cope with their anxiety, or their
2219		anger, or their frustration or their fluency or however it's coming
2220		out with them
2221	R	Yeah and how common would it be for children with DLD to
2222		develop mental health problems?
2223	P5	I'm not quite sure of the statistics on that, I suppose you know,
2224		maybe going back to a question you asked me a minute ago and I
2225		think of it but I didn't say it but that a child with DLD, it's
2226		usually the stats are about two in every thirty so if you think of
2227		maybe an Irish primary school class, that's two in every thirty
2228		will have DLD so it's actually quite a high, in the general scheme
2229		of things, it's quite a high percentage within a classroom but the
2230		awareness of DLD is quite poor in the general public in

2231	comparison to maybe something like autism or Down Syndrome
2232	and maybe kids are given a bit more allowances because maybe
2233	you know, they act a bit differently and they have maybe their
2234	label is known and people kind of go oh yeah yeah yeah yeah and
2235	kind of pass things over a bit but for a child with DLD, you
2236	know, the label isn't really known, people don't really know
2237	what it means so they're just kind of that child that maybe can't
2238	really talk properly or maybe can't understand anything that the
2239	teacher is saying. And I think that, to come to your question in a
2240	roundabout way, I think that can be I suppose both sides are quite
2241	damaging, I don't know, because I obviously don't have a
2242	diagnosis of autism or DLD myself, but to grow up your whole
2243	life with a label and everyone knowing your label, I wonder what
2244	the impact of that would be on your mental health as you get
2245	older as an adult and your own self-identity. Em, I suppose for
2246	some kids with DLD the danger is that their difficulties are not
2247	well-known or there's not that much knowledge out there in the
2248	public domain and that in itself is maybe placing you at risk of
2249	mental health difficulties because no one else understands how
2250	you see the world and that the world is actually, can be quite a
2251	hard place for you to participate in, communicate in. Em, but I
2252	think definitely does place you at risk of having mental
2253	difficulties, particularly I've heard of cases recently more to do
2254	with maybe the mental health services where kids maybe came
2255	into the services with their difficulties were never, for no reason

2256		or it's no one's fault it's just kind of how, either they moved
2257		house or they moved country, where difficulties that they were
2258		having just were hidden for so many years and then maybe
2259		there's an event that happens, you know a mental health event,
2260		maybe self-harming or a suicide attempt or something negative
2261		has gone wrong for them where actually when you untangle it all,
2262		behind that mental health difficulty that kind of presented itself
2263		there's actually a communication impairment, DLD basically. So
2264		I don't know does that kind of say if a child's diagnosis is known
2265		early on they get the support early on, relatively speaking early
2266		on because you can only diagnose DLD at a certain age kind of
2267		really, that it's positive for children. I don't think that would
2268		eliminate them from developing mental health issues or
2269		difficulties at different points in their life but maybe it would
2270		minimize how big those mental health difficulties might be
2271		further down the line versus a child that has had maybe no
2272		supports, em, where the reason for something negative happening
2273		from a mental health perspective is maybe because they've had
2274		no support or their difficulty hasn't been known and they've sort
2275		of been quiet all these years and not known why they were
2276		different or why things were really hard for them and not for their
2277		peers around them. Em, so yeah I don't know if that answers
2278		your question, sorry
2279	R	Yeah that's great. And what do you think is the general
22802		understanding of DLD and its impact?

2281		
2282	P5	Em..
2283	R	Among say, the general public
2284	P5	I think it's really poor, I think globally as a phenomenon I think
2285		it's really poor. And I think the more that I, you know I'm not
2286		really a big social media person, I don't necessarily like social
2287		media, I don't think it's good for people's mental health, I think
2288		it has it's pros and it's cons but I think too much of anything is
2289		bad for you, but I know the DLD movement that kind of
2290		happened in 2017, where there was a global panel of people who
2291		came along okay let's, we need to look at this globally because
2292		there's too many different terms and too many different countries
2293		and we're just going to have to look at this as one global term of
2294		DLD. I think from that come kind of em, a desire or a drive or a
2295		need to drive a campaign around raising awareness, so the raising
2296		awareness around DLD campaign, the RADLD.org campaign,
2297		and because of that I have engage a little bit more with social
2298		media. Em, but I see things about DLD on my Twitter feed, I
2299		specifically joined Twitter for the purpose, the sole purpose of
2300		staying in touch with the RADLD campaign cos I feel it's kind of
2301		so, it's in my role, I work with kids with DLD on a daily basis so
2302		I feel like I have a responsibility on me now to try educate people
2303		around me on it now. So I think because I follow certain people
2304		and certain you know, what are they called, handles and
2305		organisations, I see it on my news feed on Twitter but I don't see

2306	anything about DLD on my new feed on Instagram, my
2307	Instagram is kind of my private one and my Facebook I don't
2308	necessarily follow organisations, I do follow on both but I try to
2309	keep some things a bit more private. But, you know, you would
2310	over the years see something on one of those about a child who
2311	has say a physical disability and not being able to access services
2312	or a child who maybe has autism for different campaigns for all
2313	those other diagnoses that are out there. And not that there is
2314	anything wrong with those diagnoses or that they don't deserve
2315	attention as well, they do, but I would have never seen anything
2316	about DLD or someone starting a campaign, or running a
2317	marathon or doing a bake sale or whatever so and em, just from
2318	talking in you know personal space and people ask what do you
2319	do, where do you work and you're trying to explain to them what
2320	DLD is, just people's reactions, they've never heard of it before,
2321	they're not quite sure what you mean so I always try to compare
2322	it to something like dyslexia which is much better well-known
2323	and try to compare it to that and say it's like dyslexia but with
2324	language type of a comment. And people kind of go oh yeah I
2325	know what you're talking about now but I was involved in one of
2326	the campaigns this year around trying to raise awareness around
2327	DLD and even just the awareness among parents and teachers
2328	where, it's a new place that I've started working, em I mean they
2329	didn't know the facts. There was kind of a campaign around ten
2330	facts around DLD and kind of putting that out and people just

2331	really don't know about it, there's not that understanding or
2332	awareness out there about it yet. Hopefully that will change. I
2333	think the statistic of two in every thirty is really powerful,
2334	particularly for teachers or anybody kind of in that educational
2335	setting because when you think about it two in thirty is a lot if
2336	you think of two out of thirty sitting in front of you might have
2337	DLD, another two might have an ID, another two might have
2338	autism so when you actually put it together it's a lot of people.
2339	And I actually think DLD is more common than autism maybe.
2340	Em, and it's much less well-known. So I think we as speech and
2341	language therapists have a lot of work to do actually on
2342	advocating for these families, these kids who have DLD and
2343	really trying to raise awareness, create the same awareness that
2344	there is for other maybe difficulties and diagnoses out there.
2345	Because it is kind of like a silent phenomenon out there at the
2346	moment unless you're in the healthcare profession you've never
2347	heard of it I think or unless your child has been diagnosed with it.
2348	And even if your child is diagnosed with it very often people will
2349	turn around and say oh but sure they'll grow out it won't they
2350	and it's kind of like no... Cos when you think about it, everyone
2351	has probably met an adult with DLD you know, it's not
2352	something that you hear someone say really ever, maybe they
2353	weren't diagnosed when they were younger cos maybe it just
2354	wasn't there for them when they were younger around it so even
2355	for adults who grew up maybe without kind of knowing what the

2356		label was themselves or knowing that they, the kind of reason for
2357		why they found communication so hard, em, I think there's a lot
2358		of work to be done in this area.
2359	R	And how does this kind of understanding impact the child who
2360		has DLD?
2361	P5	Understanding of?
2362	R	As in understanding of, other people's understanding or lack of
2363		understanding impact the child?
2364	P5	Em, not to go to the negative first but lack of understanding can
2365		really just result in negative communication experiences for
2367		children unfortunately. I think from a child's perspective
2368		interacting with an adult who doesn't understand their difficulties
2369		they're kind of stereotypically labelled, you know you hear of the
2370		bold child, or the child that doesn't understand or is not able to
2371		keep up with their peers and you know, won't achieve as much as
2372		everyone else, those sort of negative labels that typically in the
2373		past might have been used around kids who maybe find language
2374		hard. So you know, I think it can result in quite negative
2375		interactions and then result in in negative behaviours with an
2376		adult who's not understanding of their difficulties. With peers
2377		then kind of the same thing, where maybe a child might end up
2378		being bullied because they stand out maybe for their differences
2379		or their difficulties around communication, they may end up
2380		quite isolated from peers because they can't understand them or
2381		they can't make their message known or maybe they always want

2382	to take the turn because they don't understand turn-taking yet so
2383	they haven't been able to build up any solid friendships so they
2384	can be quite negative experiences on maybe a peer level. Em,
2385	from a sibling point of view maybe their parents always give
2386	them allowances at home because they're different and maybe
2387	their siblings resent that, you know there can be lots of different
2388	layers to it. Em, on the the flip side, someone who is aware and
2389	understanding of a child who has DLD it can just really make
2390	communication much more positive for children and just seeing
2391	maybe that little bit of a smile on their face that you've given
2392	them praise that they've done something or the first time a child
2393	kind of says oh I can read that, where you know if you've ever
2394	tried to put some bit of reading in front of them the automatic
2395	reaction that comes out is, I can't do that, that's too hard for me, I
2396	don't read. I've come across kids who are age seven and eight
2397	who have these statements or facts about themselves, age seven
2398	and eight and they're already formed, this is it now for life, I
2399	don't read, I don't do maths, I don't do English. I mean to get to
2400	that stage and only be age seven or eight, that must be a really
2401	tough place to come from, you must have had some amount of
2402	negative experiences for you to have that as a solid statement at
2403	age seven or eight so I think having someone who understands
2404	DLD who's able to adapt the conversation and activity to the
2405	child's level in order for them to achieve is immeasurable and
2506	really really helps a child in terms of their self-confidence, their

2507		self-identity just being able to do different activities and learning
2408		in general, particularly within a school setting. Em and then also
2409		if you can get a child at that point where they're willing to give
2410		something a go because they've had a positive experience with
2411		you then that is most of your battle. Because if a child will have a
2412		go and is willing to get involved then they can learn. It's the kids
2413		where they've had so many negative experiences that they've just
2414		closed off and shut down, they're not willing to have a go, that's
2415		a much harder place to come from because if you're not willing
2416		to have a go that means that you're not willing to learn anymore,
2417		you're kind of done so you're only going to have negative
2418		experiences and everything is going to be tough. But if you're
2419		willing to have a go and participate and kind of have that open
2420		interaction that an adult or a peer can give you when they have
2421		that nice understanding of what it's like to be you then you can
2422		grow from that and you can develop and you can achieve in your
2423		life. So I think someone's understanding of DLD, or lack of
2424		understanding of DLD can kind of set a child off on two different
2425		paths and have a big impact.
2426	R	And are there any other areas of a child's life that you think are
2427		impacted by DLD?
2428	P5	Any other areas?
2429	R	Yes
2430	P5	Em... just trying to think. Em, I suppose just to kind of make
2431		sure I've talked about everything, the main areas that I think I've

2432		talked about are things like academic, emotional regulation,
2433		behaviour, eh kind of problem solving skills, social interaction
2434		skills, independence, organisation and I suppose any area of your
2435		life that involves all of those skills is going to be impacted. Em,
2436		the only other thing I haven't said that maybe I kind of said in
2437		terms of academic attainments is maybe after school, like where
2438		do you know after primary school or after secondary school or
2439		even in terms of getting through secondary school as a child with
2440		DLD, you know kind of knowing the supports that are there for
2441		you and being supported. I actually heard a comment from
2442		someone recently which I thought was extremely negative and
2443		unfortunately just not the perception you want of a child with
2444		DLD would be oh sure he's not going to need Maths anyway as
2445		he gets older because sure he won't get to do anything kind of a
2446		comment or he won't need to read because he won't ever get to
2447		go to college
2448	R	Ok yeah
2449	P5	Which is quite of a, you know, a sad negative viewpoint of child
2450		with DLD because a child with DLD can achieve. A child with
2451		DLD can go on, with the right supports, can go on to study
2452		further after primary school, after secondary school, you know
2453		there's no reason why a child with DLD shouldn't make it on to
2454		maybe some sort of third level institution. What that third level
2455		institution is, you know it may not be a university studying a very
2456		academic course but you know there's no reason why a child

2457		with DLD with the right supports shouldn't be able to get a
2458		qualification that draws on their strengths where they can
2459		function independently and have a real-life working job and get a
2460		qualification in whatever takes their interest and I think we
2461		should be supporting kinds to do that. The only other thing with
2462		DLD is there's a risk of co-morbidity, it increases your risk of
2463		having other difficulties so children with DLD that I've seen
2464		previously might have had some dual-diagnoses, they might have
2465		had coordination-DCD, coordination dyspraxia, they might have
2466		ADHD as well. Em, literacy difficulties, or numeracy difficulties
2467		like dyslexia, dyscalculia they can co-occur with DLD so I
2468		suppose that would impact all your other areas of development
2469		but I think hopefully from what I've said hopefully that covers all
2470		the areas that I can think of at the moment anyway