

Commonalities	<p><b>Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)</b> and <b>Specific Learning Disorder</b> are neurodevelopmental disorders. Although their precise <b>etiology</b> is unknown, in both cases, the primacy of biological factors (i.e., combined effects of many genes) is assumed to interact with nonbiological factors. <b>These disorders commonly co-occur.</b> A dual diagnosis is warranted when clinical judgment &amp; assessment findings indicate each condition restricts daily activities including learning. Ideally, children making slow educational progress should receive a comprehensive, interdisciplinary assessment of language, cognitive, overall development, and academic achievement.</p>	
	<p><b>Developmental Language Disorder</b></p> <p>Persistent language difficulties with a significant impact on everyday interactions or school learning that emerges in the course of development (CATALISE, but also consistent with the ICD-11 category of the same name). This definition is consistent with DSM-5 Language Disorder, and includes pragmatic language skills (see also, Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder)<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p><b>An impairment in phonology only (&amp; no other components of language) would not be diagnosed as DLD</b> (CATALISE), but could indicate a Speech Sound Disorder (speech perception and production difficulty) or Dyslexia (word recognition difficulty).</p> <p>DLD pertains to language learning. The human brain is predisposed for language acquisition, which means that language learning happens largely without explicit instruction. <b>Difficulties arise early on but may not raise concern for a variety of reasons</b> (variability in early language development; assuming child will 'catch up'; difficulties seeming 'not too bad'). Many individuals with DLD go undiagnosed or mis-diagnosed. 'Language is literacy is language'<sup>3</sup>. <b>DLD can be expected to impact both oral and written language</b> (and related academic skills including math). In older individuals, difficulties may be more evident in written language tasks such as reading comprehension &amp; written composition.</p> <p>Minimally, a child with DLD should be assessed for dyslexia<sup>4</sup> and reading comprehension. A lack of response to individualized instruction (with sufficient dosage) targeting educational skills would be a <b>reason to refer</b> an assessment of learning.</p>	<p><b>Specific Learning Disorder</b></p> <p>Persistent difficulty learning and using academic skills (word reading, reading comprehension, spelling, written composition, math) identified no earlier than 6 months after targeted instruction begins (DSM-5). The ICD-11 category, Developmental Learning Disorder, is largely consistent except for the inclusion of a mismatch with expected general level of intellectual functioning.</p> <p><b>If the Specific Learning Disorder manifests in word recognition</b> (defined in the DSM-5 as difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and/or poor spelling abilities), <b>it is often called Dyslexia.</b></p> <p>Specific Learning Disorder pertains to academic learning, which requires formal instruction, effort, and lots of practice<sup>2</sup>. <b>Difficulties arise during the school years</b>, however, they may not be apparent until academic demands exceed the individual's capacity in affected domains. Difficulties persist despite high quality classroom instruction &amp; more intensive intervention targeting the particular skills with which the individual is struggling.</p> <p><b>Specific Learning Disorder pertains to the learning of written language</b> (and other academic skills including math). Oral language impairments are not part of the diagnosis. However, some oral language manifestations could include poor academic vocabulary related to lack of reading, or disorganized expression related to poor inferring or metacognitive skills.</p> <p>Minimally, a child with dyslexia should be assessed for DLD<sup>4</sup>, as should those with dyscalculia or dysgraphia. Difficulties with academic progress especially verbally-mediated tasks across subject area would be a <b>reason to refer</b> for a language assessment.</p>
Definitions, Criteria, DLD-Dyslexia Relationship	<p>In some educational jurisdictions &amp; countries, educational support is provided based on the presence of a disability (or other educational identification label) rather than a disorder</p>	
Key differences: (1) How & when; (2) Oral & written	<p><b>Disorder</b> – A condition with a presumed biological origin often for which no specific cause is known, and which impairs individual functioning and capacity.</p> <p>Some educational identifications are specific to speech &amp; language (e.g., speech language communication needs (SLCN); speech/language impairment). <b>A child with DLD may be identified for services using any of these speech &amp; language labels.</b></p>	<p><b>Disability</b> – A state of functioning (disability) arising due to a mismatch between an individual's capacities and the demands of the environment.</p> <p>Many definitions of learning disability (see below) implicate MANY conditions that can interrupt learning including DLD, Specific Learning Disorder, ADHD<sup>5</sup>, and others. <b>Children with DLD or Specific Learning Disorder may be identified as having a Specific Learning Disability.</b></p>
Refer	<p><b>Specific Learning Disability<sup>6</sup></b> – As a result of a disorder involving language or learning processes, an individual experiences (or manifests) difficulties with regular educational curricula involving the abilities to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do math.</p>	
Educational Identification	<p>Key take aways: (1) Specific Learning Disorder &amp; Specific Learning Disability are not synonymous even though they overlap strongly (2) DLD, Specific Learning Disorder, and other disorders can manifest as a Specific Learning Disability</p>	

1-Redmond, 2020; JSHR, 63, 3273-76; 2-Share, 2021; Br. J. S. 11, 1510; 3-Snow, 2016; USLP, 18, 216-228; 4-Adior & Hogan, 2019; PIBBS, 210-217; 5-Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; 6-IDEA (USA)