

An Introductory Guide to SEN Types with BehaviourWatch



Welcome!

Here at Eduspot, we aim to be conscientious and helpful every day to our customers and beyond. In November 2020, we spent a week dedicating our social media posts into looking into several Special Educational Needs (SEN). Throughout the week, we shared articles, interesting facts and interviews, aiming to increase knowledge and remove some of the stigma attached to various SEN types. Our product, BehaviourWatch is an extremely useful tool for SEN schools:

What is BehaviourWatch?

BehaviourWatch is in use by SEN schools both nationally and internationally to efficiently record critical data to help institutions clearly identify patterns and answer vital questions, such as "Is pupil X's behaviour a challenge every Monday? Does pupil X display negative behaviour during every period 4? When is pupil X showing positive behaviour? Is the library causing pupil X a challenge? Does pupil X have a challenge with a particular member of staff? What interventions are helping reduce

negative behaviour? Is medication impacting behaviour?".

Each system is custom built to match existing policies and processes to support SEN schools with all aspects of behaviour management and can include SEMH assessment, EHCPs and intervention tracking to improve outcomes.

If you'd like to schedule a tour of the system, [feel free to click here](#). Let's look into the various SEN Types.

Enjoy!

Contents

3. Autism

We give you some information about autism spectrum disorder and how it affects those who live with the disorder as well as providing some resources that might help.

5. SEMH

The conversation about social, emotional and mental health has begun and we're providing you with some tips to help students who might be affected.

7. ADHD & ADD

We give you the breakdown on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder and highlight how different the two disorders are.

9. ADHD Interview

We've had a chat with artist and illustrator Yon, who suffers with ADHD. They've given us insight into their experience living with the disorder and how it affects them.

11. BESD

This page gives you an introduction to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in young people and provides some resources on how you can help any students that are affected.

13. Learning Disability

We're talking severe and complex learning disabilities, and how different they can all be. We've provided some tips and tricks on how you can help.

15. Dyslexia

Dyslexia is one of the most common SEN types and we're giving you the facts on the disorder. We've also got some ways you can help your dyslexic students succeed.

17. Speech & Language

One of the most common SEN types for young students, speech and language disorders come in all different shapes and sizes. We talk you through the most common ones.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

What Is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disorder that affects a person's social and communication skills along with their interests and behaviour. It is known as a developmental disorder as it is usually diagnosed when a child is young, but diagnoses can be given at any age. ASD does not discriminate and can occur in any racial, ethnic or economic group. While Autism is a lifelong disorder, there are lots of treatments and services that can help to improve the symptoms.

What Are The Main Signs Of ASD?

ASD is known as a spectrum due to its wide-ranging symptoms and severity. However, these are some of the main symptoms of ASD:

- Finding it hard to communicate with others
- Difficulty in understanding how other people feel
- Find bright lights or loud noises stressful or overwhelming
- Getting anxious about new or unfamiliar situations
- Taking longer to understand information
- Repetition of behaviours.

While these negative symptoms

can impact someone with ASD, many strengths also come alongside the challenges. For a lot of people with ASD, the ability to memorise a lot of information comes very easily as they are usually very strong visual or auditory learners excelling in maths, science, music or art.

What Are Some Helpful Strategies?

While there is no cure for ASD, there are lots of treatments that can reduce symptoms and help a person lead a happy life. In some cases, doctors can prescribe medications that can reduce stress, aggressive behaviours and hyperactivity. Doctors can also provide intensive and structured therapies which help teach basic life-skills, reduce challenging behaviours, increase strengths and increase communication skills.

In the classroom, having a clear and established routine can be one of the most important and helpful things you can do for your students with ASD. Having clear communication with the student and their parents or guardians is also a really important step. The parents and carers of a child with autism are the true experts, and you can learn a lot by chatting to them!

What Resources Are Available?

One of the most important things you can do is to talk with your doctor. If you've received a formal diagnosis, your doctor will be able to advise you on the next steps and best course of action to take. It can be helpful to record your conversations with your doctor (with their permission of course!) So you don't forget any crucial information – there are some apps which can help (Such as Abridge)

Another great tip is to keep hold of any written information you have from your doctor or health professional; this can really help an individual qualify for special programs.

Why not try and find a local support group?

There are many groups for children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and sharing your experiences can be helpful to yourself and others.



Social, Emotional and Mental Health



What Is Social, Emotional And Mental Health?

Social, Emotional And Mental Health (also known as SEMH) is when a young person has trouble managing their emotions and their behaviours. A child with SEMH needs might present as being quite quiet and withdrawn, or they might show disruptive and out-of-control behaviours. These behaviours are responses to underlying mental health needs.

What Are Some Signs of A Young Person With SEMH Needs?

It is important to note that every child is different, and if you notice a child acting in a way that is unusual compared to their typical behaviour, it should be observed. Here are some of the main signs:

- Mood changes
- Disruptive or anti-social behaviour
- Emotional outbursts
- Self-harm or desire to self-harm
- Petty crime such as theft or truancy
- Anger that can be expressed through the desire to harm others.

What Are Some Helpful Strategies?

For most children, social, emotional and mental health issues do not have to be lifelong and can be moved past with help. There are a few things that can be done in the classroom to help children who are struggling with their social, emotional and mental health:

- Try sitting the child next to someone who is more settled
- Understand their triggers, and put measures in place to avoid those
- Set tasks with short and clear instructions, clear goals and time-scales.
- Make an effort to praise the student for their positive behaviours.
- Send positive messages home, as well as the negative ones.
- Allow the pupil to remove themselves from the classroom if they become wound-up or anxious.

What Resources Are Available?

If you're noticing changes in the behaviour of your child, it's a good idea to book an appointment to speak with your doctor. They can advise on if this is a mental health issue, or if there is something else going on with your child.

Once your doctor has confirmed your suspicions, they will be able to advise you on the best course of action to take. It's important that you notify your school as well, as they'll be able to help your child adjust to their new diagnosis.

There are lots of different types of therapy available for children with social, emotional and mental health struggles and it might take some research for you to find a therapy that is best for your child. If they are a creative child, art therapy might be perfect for them! There are also other creative therapies such as music or drama therapies.

There are also some other options for therapies, including cognitive behavioural therapy or dialectic behavioural therapy. A quick internet search will be able to help you decide which option is best for you, but a chat with your doctor might help too.

Why not try and find a local support group?

There are many groups for children who are suffering with their mental health. You might be able to find some like-minded parents to chat with, and your child might be able to make some friends who are in a similar situation to them.

ADHD & ADD



What Is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (also known as ADHD) is a behavioural disorder that affects someone's ability to concentrate and their impulsiveness. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed when a child is young and become more noticeable when a child begins school. As people with ADHD age, the symptoms become easier to manage but they rarely disappear. Sufferers of ADHD will often have other problems, such as anxiety or issues with sleep.

What Are The Symptoms Of ADHD?

There are two main categories of symptoms for those who have ADHD: inattentiveness and hyperactivity/impulsiveness. Sometimes, those with ADHD can just have one of the categories, while some have both. Most of the time, inattentiveness can be diagnosed as Attention Deficit Disorder or ADD as the conditions are very similar.

Inattentiveness:

- Short attention span
- Making easy mistakes
- Forgetfulness or losing things easily

- Difficulty in listening or following instructions
- Disorganisation

Hyperactivity and Impulsiveness:

- Constant fidgeting
- Being unable to concentrate for long periods
- Excessive talking or movement
- Acting without thinking
- Low sense of danger
- Interrupting conversations

What is ADD?

Attention Deficit Disorder is a neurological disorder that affects someone's ability to concentrate and stay organised. It is often compared to ADHD but the symptoms of ADD can be much harder to spot.

What Are The Symptoms Of ADD?

The symptoms of ADD are often characterised as 'inattentiveness.' Some common characteristics include:

- Appearing to be bored or disinterested
- Prone to forgetfulness and disorganisation
- Often misplace items or fail to complete assignments on time
- Working at a slow pace and handing in incomplete work
- Having difficulty in starting tasks
- Making careless errors with work.

It's quite common that ADD goes undiagnosed or confused for laziness. Students with ADD are often quiet and will have few interactions with teachers and sometimes will appear to be paying attention even while daydreaming.

How Can We Help Students With ADD And ADHD In The Classroom?

There are a few things that we can do to help our students with ADHD and ADD, as it can be quite challenging to keep them engaged in the classroom. One of the key things is to be patient with them while they become interested in the class.

- Be discreet and don't single them out
- Give clear instructions to the whole class
- Create a distraction-free space in the classroom
- Prepare the students for learning
- Use visual aids like charts and colour-coding.
- Ensure the student has a clear system for recording assignments and due dates.



We're joined by Yon, a freelance comic and concept artist who regularly discusses the challenges of living with ADHD on social media.

We chatted with Yon about the representation and challenges of ADHD in our society, and how it can affect a living with the condition.

Check them out on [Twitter here.](#)

How Do You Think ADHD Is Perceived In Society As A Whole? Is This A Fair Representation?

Well, the name "ADHD" in itself is already a little misleading. It's not that we have a 'deficit' of attention! It's more that we can't control where that attention goes. As far as I know, the general stereotype for ADHD are often hyperactive children. In fact, before I was diagnosed with it myself, my own understanding of ADHD was extremely limited and I never imagined that it was something I was struggling with. I had the same assumptions about ADHD as being a condition for hyperactive children. ADHD sufferers in media are often portrayed as such so that was what I assumed it was until I actually researched what it entailed! So no, I don't believe that it's a fair

What Are The Biggest Challenges

Associated With ADHD?

Personally, one of the biggest challenges associated with ADHD has been executive dysfunction. Executive Functions are skills that involve planning and organization, controlling emotions and behaviour, remembering details, time management and a quite a few other important things. To the outside person, Executive Dysfunction looks a lot like de-motivation, laziness or carelessness when actually it's all of the above mentioned skills just not working. Simple tasks such as answering emails or performing basic chores become incredibly difficult and often cause more anxiety and stress. I could look like I'm lying on my bed, ignoring an email I really need to answer, but internally I'm trying to work myself up to the task of actually doing it while my anxiety simmers in the back, reminding me how important it is...

How Do You Think Children With ADHD Should Be Taught At School? Are

There Any Strategies OR Should They Be Taught Exactly The Same As The Rest Of The Class?

One thing that had always helped me in my classes was when a teacher would sit down and personally help me through the areas, I had trouble with after the class. The engagement and discussion between the teacher after that class would reinforce what I had heard or learned and would help me keep my focus on the work in front of me instead of being driven to distraction in a classroom setting. Allowing them to use non-disruptive fidget toys or allowing them to doodle in class can sometimes help too! (I was often reprimanded in class for drawing while the teacher was teaching, but I needed to DO something while listening or else I would lose my mind, haha!) Writing out numbered, specific and clear instructions for homework or tasks. I would often completely miss specific things in my work or just forget and give up entirely on whole tasks because I simply could NOT follow what the teacher was saying, fast enough to write it

down. It was AWFUL! Seating them away from windows, doors or the back of the classroom. Windows and doors can cause distractions or encourage daydreaming (I know it sure did for me) Using more visual methods of teaching such as charts, pictures, colour coding and the like! I could go on for a lot longer, ADHD effects so many areas of cognitive function! But I believe that most important of all would be patience and understanding. There were times in my school life where I genuinely wanted to keep up with a class and make a teacher proud and prove to them that I was more than a lazy student, but this was before any of us knew ADHD even existed let alone have any understanding of why I behaved in a specific way.

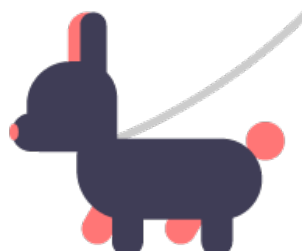
How Do You Think Technology Could Help Children With ADHD In The Future?

Using a visual timer with alarms can help with understanding how much time there is left to finish a task or assignment or to remind them or something they may have

missed. Having a visual timer we can see helps with understanding how much time we have left since we suffer from time blindness. A simple to-do list on a tablet or homework briefs on a tablet would already be a massive help in organisation. I remember losing entire worksheets and homework sheets in the abyss of my bag only to find them half a year later. Crumpled and squashed at the bottom... Electronic Calendars can serve as a timeline where you can list important deadlines or turn in dates, events and the like. It helps with visualising what's ahead or what should come first as well as putting into context how much time is left for a specific thing.

What Work Do You Do Which Is Related To ADHD?

I'm a freelance concept and comic artist, but I draw ADHD awareness comics in my spare time or when inspiration strikes! A lot of the stuff I draw and talk about concerning ADHD is stuff that I've learnt through my own understanding and research to better understand why I function the way I do. So, I'm in no way an expert or a professional, haha! I just hope that I can raise awareness and understanding about what ADHD actually is through my comics.



Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties



What Are Behavioural, Emotional And Social Difficulties?

Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) are where young people/children find difficulty in successfully managing their behaviour and emotions, resulting in them showing behaviour which is often unpredictable. Children with BESD are often difficult to understand and it isn't rare from them to become anxious and/or scared regularly.

What Are The Signs Of Behavioural, Emotional And Social Difficulties?

Typical characteristics of children with BESD can include:

- Disruptive, antisocial and uncooperative behaviour
- Temper tantrums
- Frustration, anger and verbal and physical threats/aggression
- Withdrawn and depressed attitudes

- Anxiety and self-harm
- Stealing
- Truancy
- Vandalism
- Drug abuse
- Setting fires

How Can We Help Students With Behavioural, Emotional And Social Difficulties?

1. Be Patient And Set Small Goals

It can be easy to constantly feel the need to intervene and micromanage the behaviour of your pupils. However, it's important you pick specific goals to target, then focus on completing them.

2. One-to-One Time

If a student is particularly challenging, make sure you try to speak with them outside of the classroom environment. Where there is a crowd, the student may act up to get attention and laughs out of his/her classmates.

3. Pick Your Battles

Sometimes it may seem constructive to point out small things and aim for perfection. However, take it one step at a time, if a child is managing to focus on their work, but simultaneously tapping on their desk, it may be worth letting them get away with

it and reward them for their focus.

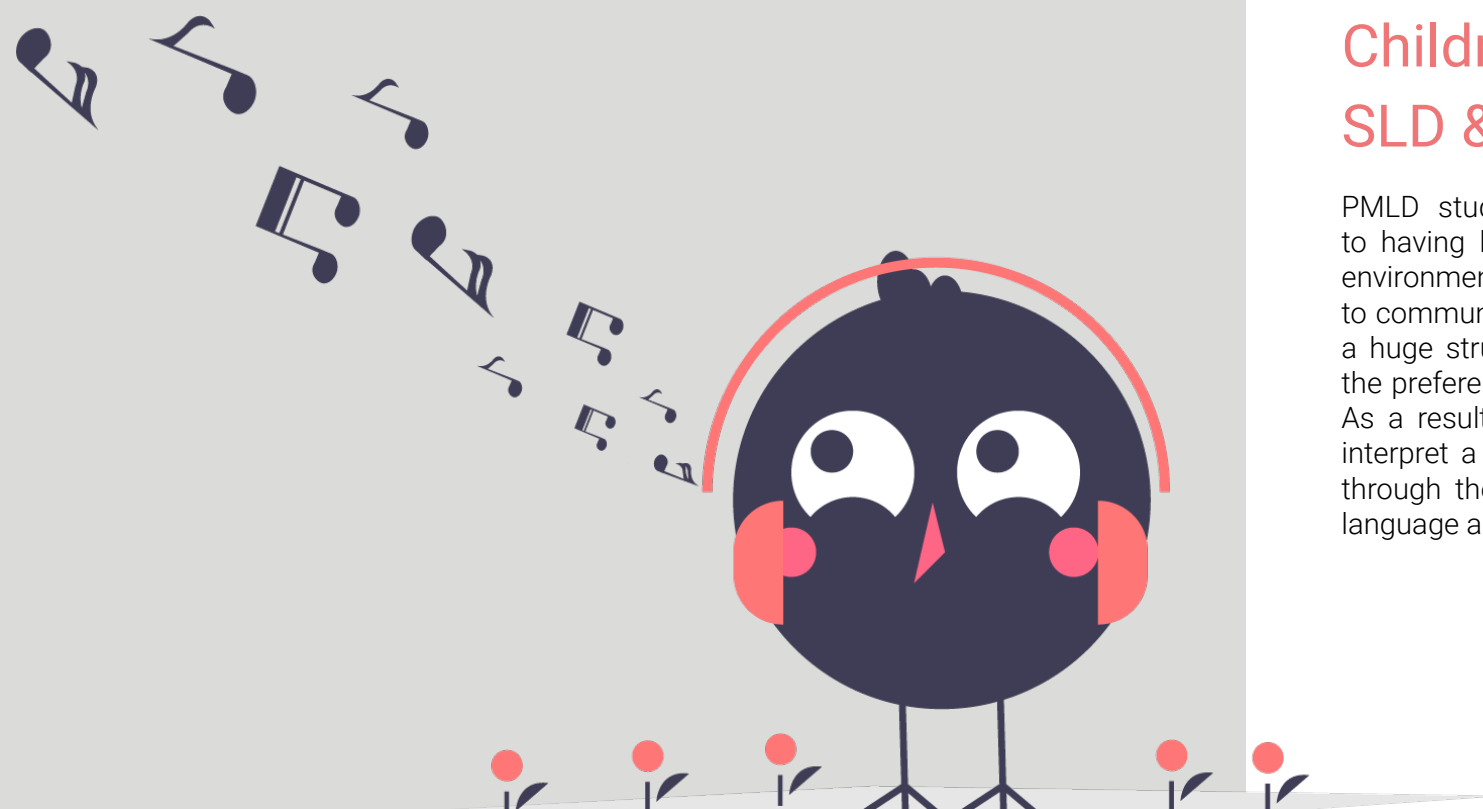
What Resources Are Available?

If you're noticing changes in the behaviour of a student, it's a good idea to chat with their parents and suggest they book an appointment to speak with your doctor. A doctor can easily identify emotional issues and suggest techniques that might assist you.

The website SEBDA.org is a charitable organisation which provides members with resources, facts and research that will help support children and young adults to help support their well-being.

The charity YoungMinds also provides lots of support for children who are suffering with mental illnesses, and support for their families and schools. They're also providing extra support to those who have struggled with adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic, and providing schools with some more support too.

Severe & Complex Learning Disabilities



What Are Severe And Complex Learning Difficulties?

"There are approximately 38,000 school-aged children in England with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)... This is a group of children with the most complex needs, and they need to be taught by high quality, adaptable teachers, who are able to keep pace with their requirements."

Toby Salt, Independent Review of Teacher Supply for Pupils with Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

What Are The Difficulties Associated With Teaching Children With SLD & PMLD?

PMLD students are often used to having little control over their environment due to their inability to communicate. This can lead to a huge struggle in distinguishing the preferences of these children. As a result, it can be difficult to interpret a child's feelings simply through their vocalisations, body language and facial expressions.

How Can We Help Students With SLD & PMLD?

Get To Know Them On A Personal And Medical Basis

This way, you can start to understand the child and build that personal connection. Using this relationship as a basis for teaching is a great way to help the child learn and fulfil their potential.

Be Patient

Of course, in dealing with SLD and PMLD children you are going to need a lot of patience. Progression will be very gradual and always remember to celebrate the small wins along the way.

Support

As MenCap say: "it's helpful to talk about groups of people who have common concerns and distinctive needs, face barriers to be included and need help to fight for their equal rights." There are many important links on their website, so we suggest you [explore here](#).

Work Closely With Family

The parents or guardians of the student are the experts. They know exactly how the students respond best, and what their favourite and least favourite things are. Ensure that you keep the lines of communication open so you can work together to ensure the student is happy and comfortable while at school.

What Resources Are Available?

There are such a wide range of severe and complex learning difficulties, it might be useful to speak to your doctor for more specific strategies and resources that might be able to help your family.

There are some great UK based charities that might be able to provide some support. A quick internet search will be able to show some amazing charities that you'll be able to turn to.

[Carer's Direct](#) is an NHS service that provides information, advice and support to those who care for people with disabilities.

How Can Schools Help?

There are many specialist schools who deal with a wide array of different severe and complex learning disabilities and are equipped with staff who have specific training to be able to help.

[SpecialNeedsUK](#) have a search feature on their website that might be able to help you find some schools that will be able to help your child and their specific needs.

Dyslexia



What Is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that affects people's ability to read and write and their ability to identify speech sounds. It can be commonly known as a reading disability. Sufferers can experience different levels of severity, with some being able to work through the disability, with others being affected more severely and being heavily impacted.

Most people think of dyslexia as seeing words or letters backwards, but the truth is, the issue comes from being able to manipulate language, rather than having issues viewing it. Dyslexia affects 1 in 5 people and impacts each person differently.

What Are The Signs Of Dyslexia?

Individuals with dyslexia may spell words phonetically. For example, they may spell "stick", 'stik'. Brains with dyslexia rely on the right side of the brain more than usual, this means when they read a word it takes a longer trip through their brain. This causes them to read with more difficulty.

There are other tell-tale signs for young children, such as the difficulty to learn or recite common nursery rhymes or confusion with similarly sounding words.

For school aged children, those with dyslexia might have difficulty processing and understanding what they're hearing or have a reading age which is well below their expected levels.

Most children are ready to start to learn how to read when they first join school, but it might be a good idea to consult a doctor if a child is behind their peers by this age.

When dyslexia is diagnosed early, children have a much better chance at overcoming the condition, rather than it continuing into adulthood.

How Can We Help Students With Dyslexia?

Don't Brand People As 'Defective.' Everyone is different, and many people have lived happy, successful lives despite having dyslexia, such as Muhammad Ali and Picasso. Students with dyslexia often excel in other areas and are noted for their creativity. An interesting note is that 1 in 3 business entrepreneurs in based in America have dyslexia.

Embrace Creativity
Those who struggle with dyslexia often find they have remarkable talents in other areas, such as in art or mathematics.

Own It
Don't be afraid or embarrassed to tell your teacher, they will give you more patience and support you in

your difficult moments.

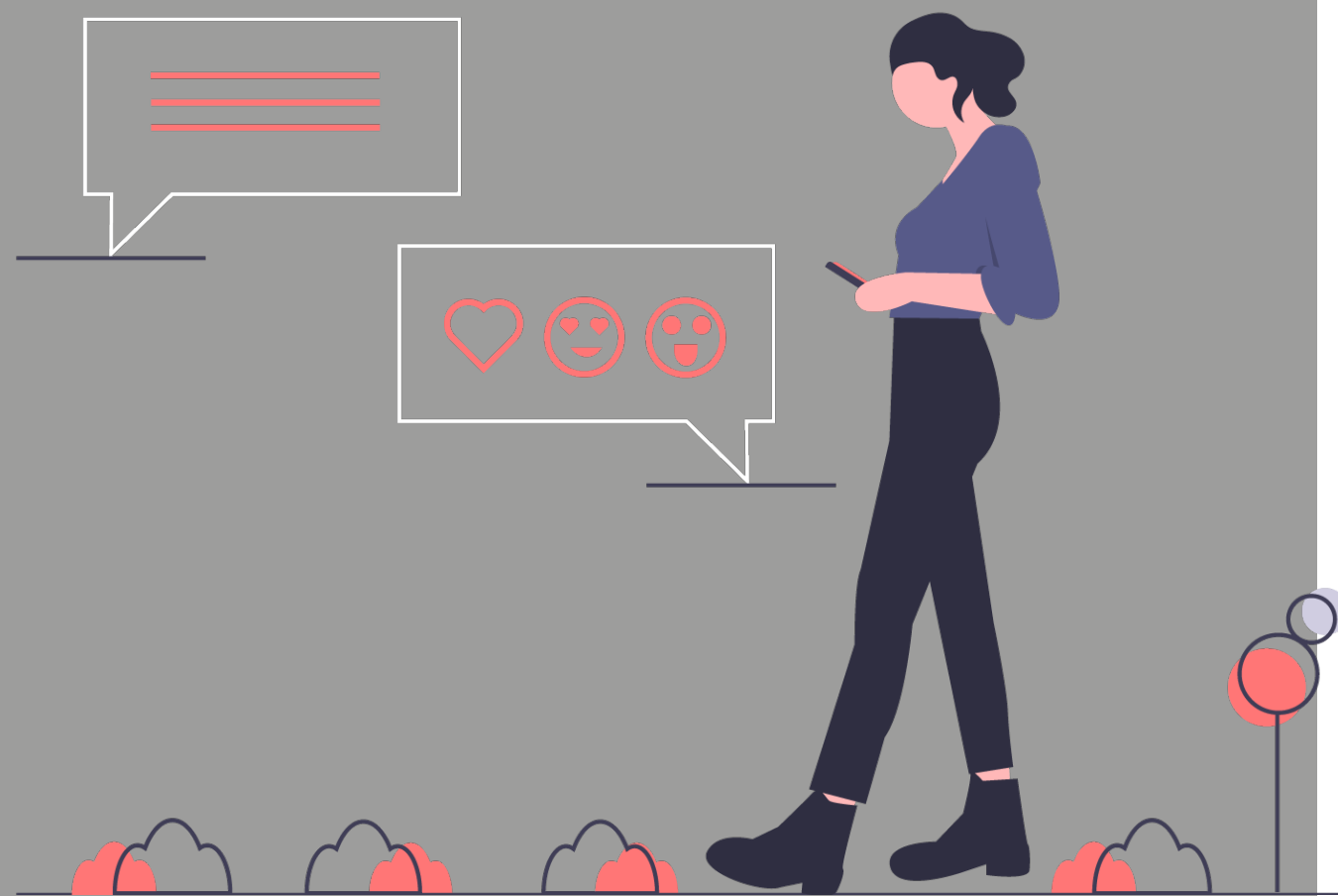
Work Closely With Parents
It's important that you talk openly with parents to talk about their child's progress. It can be really helpful for a child to use the same strategies at home, and in the classroom.

What Resources Are Available?

It can be really worrying for parents or guardians to receive a dyslexia diagnosis as reading and writing is fundamental as they grow up. With the right support though, a child can learn to manage their dyslexia and find strategies that make things easier for them.

There are a wide range of educational games available to help work on areas of learning that dyslexic students struggle with the most. [Nessy](#) offers a range of computer games that promote structure multi-sensory learning and are great for all students, as well as those with dyslexia.

Speech & Language Disorders



What Are Speech And Language Disorders?

Learning a language takes time, and children can vary in how long it takes before they become masters of theirs. Typically, developing children may have trouble with individual sounds, words, and sentences in the early process, but, for the most part, children are able to overcome these difficulties. In some cases, children may experience issues with their speech which requires specialist treatment.

There can be multiple possible causes to delayed speech and language development. Examples could include hearing loss, neurological disorders or psychological trauma. For most children, the cause of their speech and language delay is unknown.

What Are The Different Types Of Speech And Language Disorders?

Almost all types of speech and language disorder, whether they are rooted in behavioural issues, brain damage or muscle disorders can be categorised into these 10 categories:

Apraxia of Speech (AOS)

AOS happens when the neural pathway from the brain and

the speech function is lost or obscured. The person knows what they want to say – however the brain is unable to send the correct messages so that speech muscles can articulate what they want to say, even though the speech muscles themselves work just fine.

Stuttering or Stammering

Stuttering is known to some extent by almost everyone, but the causes are a bit of a mystery. It is common within children, but three quarters 'out-grow' it. Stuttering also includes non-verbal actions such as blinking and tics.

Dysarthria

Dysarthria is a form of nerve of muscle damage, which manifests as any kind of physical mouth damage, causing slurred speech or limited tongue, jaw or lip movement.

Lisping

Lisping is also very well-known; the most common type is when a speaker makes a "th" sound when trying to pronounce an "s" sound. Lisps are common amongst children, and many grow out of it.

Spasmodic Dysphonia (SD)

SD is a chronic long-term disorder which effects the voice, resulting in speech which is 'shaky, hoarse, groaning, tight, or jittery'

Cluttering

Cluttering is a fluency disorder, where a person's speech becomes to rapid, jerky or both. This usually includes plenty of speech disfluencies, such as "well" and "um".

Muteness – Selective Mutism

Muteness is when a person

does not speak in some or most situations, however that person is physically capable of speaking.

Aphasia

Aphasia is a communication disorder caused by damage to the brain's language capabilities.

Speech Delay – Alalia

Alalia refers to the phenomenon when a child is not making normal attempts to verbally communicate. This could be due to being a "late bloomer", or it could be due to the child having some kind of brain damage.

Issues Related to Autism

Often, autism and speech disorders tend to go hand-in-hand. This is because, by definition, all children with autism have social communication issues.

What Resources Are available?

If you're concerned about your child's speech development, it's a good idea to make an appointment to chat with your doctor. They'll be able to gauge the severity of the delay and advise you on next steps to take.

This might be therapies which can aid speech and language development, or just small techniques you can do at home.

The NHS website provides some great techniques that can be used at home with ease.



support@behaviourwatch.co.uk

eduspot.co.uk/behaviourwatch

linkedin.com/company/11510412



Copyright Community Brands, 2020. Groupcall, Eduspot and WisePay, Teachers2Parents, SchoolMoney, BehaviourWatch and SchoolPod are tradenames of Community Brands.

Registered office: 2 Darker Street, Leicester, Leicestershire, England, LE1 4SL. Community Brands disclaims any proprietary interest in trademarks and tradenames other than its own. E&OE.