

# Glossary

## Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

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Language and emotional development are closely linked and affect each other powerfully, influenced by a range of factors including thinking skills, play and interaction. Both language and emotional development can also be influenced by environment and, in particular, the relationships between carers and the developing child.

Complex skills like co-operation, self-control, and language are typically learned through interactions with a caregiver, and usually begin by the age of five, in time for starting school.

Emotional and behavioural problems are more common in individuals with developmental disabilities. Research has established that there can be an association between speech, language and communication difficulties, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. However this association is complex and it is not always clear whether an emotional and behavioural difficulty has developed as a secondary feature, or co-exists with the communication difficulty.

The ability to communicate and understand is essential to building relationships. Children who have speech, language and communication needs often develop social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and need support to develop friendships. Conversely, children and young people who find it difficult to interact socially, express emotions inappropriately and demonstrate challenging behaviours are also likely to have communication difficulties although they may go undetected and remain 'hidden'.

Prompt identification and timely intervention for both communication and psychological needs is important. One of the conclusions of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language was

that children referred either to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), or to speech and language therapy services, should have both their language and their behaviour properly assessed.

### References

**All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties** (2013) *The links between speech, language and communication needs and social disadvantage*.

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**Cross M** (2011) *Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Communication Problems* (2nd edition). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

**Law J, Parkinson A and Tamhne R** (2000) (Eds.), *Communication Difficulties in Childhood*. Oxon: Radcliffe Medical Press Ltd

**Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists** (2010) *RCSLT resource manual for commissioning and planning services for SLCN: mental health*.  
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**Please note: Afasic does not hold copies of any referenced material. These publications should be available at academic libraries.**

*Written by Zein Pereira, speech and language therapist*



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**Afasic**

**E-mail: [info@afasic.org.uk](mailto:info@afasic.org.uk)**

**Tel: 020 7490 9410**

**Helpline: 0300 666 9410**

**[www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)**

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