



We asked parents of children with Developmental Language Disorder what's working with home schooling and they came back with loads of ideas which we have pulled together in general themes. Everyone's situation is different, so some of these tips will work for you, and others won't, and that's OK.

Structuring the day

How parents structured the day varied a lot. Some like to have a structured timetable, that might look a bit like a school timetable. Others were using a basic, but flexible timetable, and so could respond to their child's engagement. A third group prefer to be more child led and go with what they are motivated by on the day.

Motivation

Lots of parents found motivating their children a challenge and getting started a particular issue. Parents were using a range of strategies including lots of encouragement or tapping into interests.

Many are using reward activities for completing tasks. So, once an agreed piece of work is completed the child gets to choose a pre-agreed activity. This could be X-box, craft, basketball or baking.

And for some children worksheets are a total non-starter and so other ways of learning need to be found such as games or just chatting.

Independence

Many children find independent working particularly difficult. Some parents find that short easier tasks help promote independence, but that more complex tasks need to be done jointly. If your aim is to develop independence then the task needs to be very clear, and simple.

Resources

Twinkl is free at the moment and so proved to be a popular source of resources, as were online learning options including YouTube. Twinkl also has lots of visuals which are particularly useful for supporting language.

Physical

This is hard whilst we are all under movement restrictions but providing time for physical activity was something that parents agreed was important.

Advice from others

Parents had great advice about who to accept advice from. Friends and family whose children do not have DLD do not understand and so give poor advice. The consensus was much better to talk to other parents of children with DLD.

Weekends and holidays

Clearly mark home school days from weekends and holidays. It can be a bit confusing as during the pandemic they are all happening in the same location. Start each 'school' day with the same activity with clear expectations. It might be 'It's 9 o'clock on a school day so we need to sit at the table and check we've got all of our resources ready so we can work.' On weekends and holidays clear the school work away and explicitly say something along the lines of 'it's not a school day' so we can choose what we do today.'

Support

No one is saying that at times this process won't be hard, so reach out for help when you need to. Afasic have a helpline (details need to be inserted) but on Facebook there is a supportive closed group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/developmentallanguagedisorder/>

Your child's Speech and Language Therapist, Specialist teacher or class teacher will also be able to give specific learning advice, so do not be afraid to ask. Let them know what is working and what the issues are.

Afasic:

Parent's Helpline: Tel: 0300 666 9410

Open Mondays and Wednesdays from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm