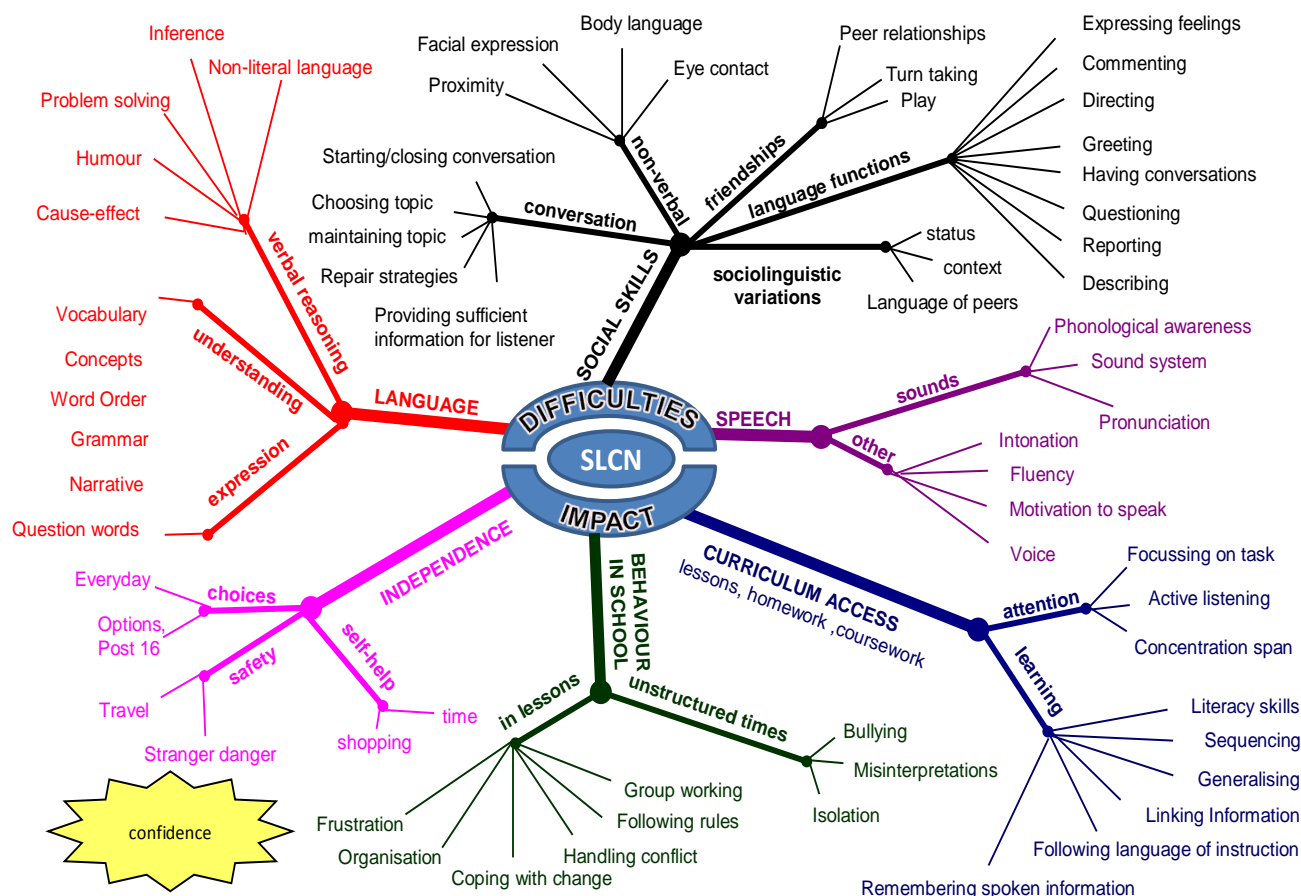


# Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Older Children

## Overview of Speech, Language and Communication Needs for the High School Student



The mind map above gives an overview of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) relating to a high school student.

The top half of the map shows the range of difficulties they may have and the bottom half the possible impact of those difficulties.

### REFERENCES

ICAN reports: *SLCN & Literacy Difficulties (2006)*, *Language & Social Exclusion (2007)*, *Communication Trust : Speech Language & Communication Information for Secondary Schools*  
 Adams C, et al 2001, *Assessment of Comprehension & Expression*, Addison J & Wirt A 1996, *Communication Difficulties, An Information Pack for Leeds Schools*  
 Semel E, et al 2006, *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals 4 UK*, Ripley K, et al 2001, *Inclusion for Children with Speech & Language Impairments*



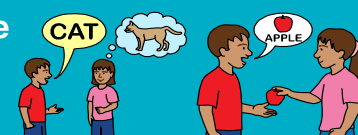
Students may have communication difficulties in the following areas:

- **Understanding of Spoken Language** (verbal comprehension or receptive language skills): refers to whether a person understands the spoken word e.g. if you say 'show me the sink' they point to it.
- **Expressive Language:** refers to whether a person can use the word themselves e.g. if you say 'what is this?' the person says 'dog'.

*Receptive and expressive language skills can be described at different levels:*

- 1) *Word level: Vocabulary, word finding, concepts, question words*
  - 2) *Sentence level: Length of utterance, word order, grammar*
  - 3) *Paragraph level (narrative): Understanding stories, telling stories, sequencing of events*
- **Verbal Reasoning:** This is a higher level language skill including the ability to problem solve, inference, work out cause and effect, appreciate humour and understand non-literal language. Good social awareness, comprehension and expressive language skills are required to have good verbal reasoning skills.
  - **Speech:** is the ability to speak words. Clear speech depends on skills such as: good phonological awareness, a correctly developed sound system and being physically able to pronounce the words. Some students may have issues with fluency or voice.
  - **Social Use of Language (pragmatics):** The ability to use language skills to interact effectively and appropriately. This includes: the ability to hold a conversation, non-verbal skills, ability to make and sustain friendships, ability to use language for a variety of functions and awareness of sociolinguistic variations i.e. varying how we speak depending on the audience/ situation.

**The impact of the communication difficulties will be different for each student and a range of these are shown on the mind map. It is important to understand the individual student's strengths and weaknesses and be aware of what helps and does not help.**



There are some behaviours which are frequently linked with communication difficulties and it is useful to be aware of these:

- Difficulty following timetables and using planners
- Presentation of work being very rushed and messy or over meticulous causing work rate to be slow
- Problems predicting outcomes
- Struggling to solve problems rationally
- Having literacy difficulties – particularly reading fluently but without understanding
- Being obsessed with certain topics/ routines/people
- Being isolated and vulnerable
- Finding it difficult to cope in non-structured times
- Distress resulting from misunderstanding other students behaviour/comments
- Inappropriate eye contact/ personal space when speaking or being spoken to
- Refusal to listen to staff or students when angry or upset
- Over-sensitivity to noise
- Easily becoming anxious or stressed for example by a change of room

