

Speech, language and communication factsheet

Useful facts and statistics from current research to use in conversations

Why is language important?

Children and young people's speech, language and communication are essential life skills

- Language skills at age two can predict reading, maths and writing ability when children start school
- Vocabulary at age five is the most important factor affecting literacy at age 11
- Good language, particularly vocabulary at 13, is a strong predictor of better outcomes at GCSE
- Good communication skills are rated as the most important employability skills needed for young people entering their first job

Many children and young people have difficulty communicating; they have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

- 10% of children and young people have long-term SLCN
- 7.6% have developmental language disorder, *a condition where children have problems understanding and/or using spoken language. There is no obvious reason for these difficulties – no hearing problem or physical disability explains them.*
- In some areas of deprivation, at least 50% of children and young people have SLCN

Without support, children and young people with SLCN can struggle academically, socially and emotionally

- Children with poor early language at age five are four times more likely to struggle with reading at age 11
- Only 15% of children with language difficulties achieved expected levels in reading, writing and Maths at the end of primary school compared with 61% of their classmates
- 20.3% of pupils with SLCN gain 4/C grade or above in English and maths at GCSE. Nationally, 63.9% of all pupils achieve this level

The impact of SLCN can be long-lasting

- 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have unidentified language difficulties
- Young people referred to mental health services are three times more likely to have SLCN than those who have not been referred
- Children with poor vocabulary skills are twice as likely to be unemployed when they reach adulthood
- 60% of young offenders have low language skills

The references for all of these facts and statistics can be found in the *Bercow: Ten Years On* report www.bercow10yearson.com