

# Factsheet 2

## Speech, language and communication needs

### Facts and figures

- Around 6% of children starting school have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). That's an average of 2 in every classroom.
- 1 child in 500 (0.2%) has a severe, long-term difficulty, likely to affect them throughout their lives.
- Parents have a legal right to request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment.

### Recognising a possible difficulty

It can be difficult to tell whether children have SLCN, as they do not look any different from other children, and their speech is not always obviously unusual. A child with any of the difficulties listed below may have SLCN, and this possibility should be investigated.

#### Pre-school

- You cannot understand what she is saying
- He is frustrated by his inability to communicate
- Poor eye contact
- She does not remember anything you say to her

- He has fewer words than other children the same age and shorter sentences
- She does not seem to understand what you say to her
- Sometimes he does not seem to hear or pay attention

#### School age

- Does not speak much and uses short sentences
- Finds it hard to remember words
- Often does not make sense
- Has difficulty learning to read and write
- Does not understand what he reads
- Has few friends at school
- Finds schoolwork hard

### Help for children with SLCN

Children with SLCN need to be taught the speech, language and social communication skills which other children learn naturally. The best results are achieved if such extra help is introduced as early as possible. Within this framework every child has his or her own individual needs.



## **Speech, language and communication needs**

- Most children with SLCN require speech and language therapy
- They will also need specialised teaching
- Some require access to signing in order to develop their communication and literacy skills
- Others may need alternative means of communication – for instance, voice boxes or symbols

- A number of children with severe difficulties need help throughout their school life and beyond

## **Advice and support**

It is important that teachers, therapists and parents work closely together to meet the needs of each individual child.

Finding the right help for your child can be difficult and stressful. The **Afasic Helpline** can help to guide you through the process of getting the right help.