Glossary of Terms

**AAC**: Alternative and Augmentative Communication i.e. sign language, symbol systems, communication aids etc.

**Active Listening**: taking an active responsibility for understanding a spoken message, e.g. using clarification strategies.

**Articulation**: the use of articulators e.g. tongue, lips and vocal folds to produce speech sounds. Articulators: lips and tongue.

**Attention**: the ability to focus in an appropriate, sustained way on a particular task or activity.

**Auditory Discrimination**: the ability to recognise and distinguish similarities and differences between speech sounds.

**Auditory Memory**: the ability to process and retain heard information for long enough to act on it (sometimes called Short-term auditory memory).

**British Sign Language (BSL)**: the language of the Deaf community in England, Scotland and Wales. BSL is a visual language system which has its own grammar (including grammatical facial expression) and idioms. It is not a signed form of English.

**Clarification Strategies**: Identifying why a message has not been understood and then requesting a change in the behaviour of the person giving the message itself to enable understanding e.g. speaking more loudly or more slowly, repeating, rephrasing, adding more specific information etc.

**Commenting**: talking about what the child is doing or is involved in – avoiding the use of excessive questioning.

**Communication**: exchanging information with other people using verbal and nonverbal means.

**Communication Environment**: who you are talking to and where you talk to them.

**Comprehension**: understanding what is said, signed or written (also referred to as Receptive Language).
**Deduction:** the ability to use given information in order to solve a problem. Deduction produces new information (M Johnson). At 6 years of age children can typically cope with a simple and visually concrete deduction.

**Delay:** typical speech and/or language development, but following a child of a younger developmental age.

**Developmental Language Disorder or DLD (Formerly ‘Specific Language Impairment’):** when a child’s language disorder (comprehension and/or expression) does not occur with another biomedical condition, such as a genetic syndrome, a sensorineural hearing loss, neurological disease, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Intellectual Disability.

**Disorder:** atypical speech and/or language development which doesn’t follow the ‘normal’ developmental pattern. The child’s speech and language skills may be developing in an unusual pattern or differently from other children of the same age.

**Dysarthria:** muscle weakness which affects the accuracy and power of articulation making speech sound slurred.

**Dysfluency:** interruptions to the smooth or fluent flow of speech, including sound and word repetitions, tense ‘blocks’ on sounds and facial grimaces (also referred to as stammer/stutter).

**Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia (DVD):** a motor speech disorder affecting the planning and co-ordination of muscle movements. Speech may be characterised by inconsistent use of sounds, visible groping for sounds, inability to articulate sound sequences when asked to do so on command, after imitation and difficulties increasing with length and complexity of sound sequence.

**Echolalia:** repetition of another’s speech sounds or language in a non-meaningful way. Expressive Language: the choice and arrangement of words into phrases and sentences, taking into account grammatical rules. The language may then be conveyed via speech, sign, symbols or writing.

**Functional Communication:** the appropriateness of which language is used within a context. Forced Alternatives: providing the child with a choice of two items/ object to verbally choose from, one of which is the target item/ object.
Glue Ear: a fluctuating hearing loss caused by the intermittent build-up of fluid behind the ear drum.

Grammar: the rules followed in language; the combination (syntax) or the modifying of words (morphology) to form appropriate phrases or sentences e.g. talking about the past or future.

Hyperm nasal: speech sounds affected by too much air flow down the nose.

Hyponasal: speech sounds affected by too little air flow down the nose.

Inference: any conclusion which one can reasonably be entitled to draw from a sentence or utterance (Hurford et al 1993). Inference uses implied or assumed information. Children begin to infer meaning from approximately 5-6 years but the skill continues to develop until at least 13 years (M Johnson).

Information Carrying Words (ICW): the number of key words that must be understood for the overall meaning of a spoken or signed utterance to be carried out e.g. “Show me the teddies nose” = 2ICW (also known as key words).

Individual Education Plan (IEP): specific targets or strategies put in place to aid a child’s access to the curriculum.

Intonation: the rhythm of how we speak.

Jargon: sound sequences, phrases and sentences with no meaningful content (this refers to child’s language but sometimes covers professionals as well!).

Language Content: the meaning of what is said, signed or written.

Language Form: how what is said, signed or written is organised e.g. rules of grammar, rules of speech.

Language Delay: language development that is following a normal pattern, but typical of a younger child. Development occurs at a slower rate.

Language Disorder: language development that follows an atypical/irregular pattern.
Language Use: how a speaker and/or signer uses language in a social context (also known as pragmatics).

Makaton: a simplified sign and symbol system based on British Sign Language (BSL) and natural gesture.

Modelling: repeating the child’s sentence, signs and thus providing an example of appropriate words and phrases.

Non-literal Language: language which requires prior world knowledge. It is based on words which usually have several meanings or which don’t make sense in combination with the other words used e.g. idioms.

Non-verbal Communication: the parts of communication which are not verbally language based, but which rely on the individual’s understanding or use of gesture, body language, facial expression, eye contact etc.

PECS: Picture Exchange Communication System created by Bondy and Frost (1994). Requires the child to exchange a picture of a desired item with another person in order to retrieve the item and thus teach the initiation of communication.

Phonology: the rule based system of sounds used in speech.

Phonological Awareness: the awareness of sounds within words for example identifying the initial sound of a word, word that rhyme and the number of syllables within a word.

Pragmatics: the rules about how we use language in social communication, including the appropriate use of eye contact, turn taking, initiation of conversation, maintaining a topic of conversation etc. Disordered pragmatic skill or development means that a child has difficulties in understanding and using the rules of interaction in an appropriate and flexible way.

Pre-linguistic Skills: skills needed before language can develop e.g. eye contact, turn taking, pretend play.

Selective Mutism AKA Reluctant Talker: a communication difficulty in which the child chooses not to speak in certain situations or to certain people although they have the ability to do so.
**Semantics:** the knowledge of the meaning surrounding words and sentences for example a ‘cat’ has two ears, four legs, fur and says “Meow”.

**Semantic-Pragmatic Disorder:** a term used to describe children who have difficulties with conversational interaction, such as initiating appropriate topics of conversation, and understanding non-literal meanings e.g. “It’s raining cats and dogs”.

**Sign Supported English (SSE):** signs drawn from British Sign Language (BSL) and used alongside spoken English in English word order. It is not a language in its own right as BSL is.

**Social Skills:** the ability to interact with other people appropriately, include making appropriate eye contact, taking turns, using appropriate language, demonstrating listener awareness, initiating interaction and responding to interaction.

**Speech Delay:** speech development that is following a normal pattern, but typical of a younger child. **Speech Disorder:** speech development that follows an atypical/irregular pattern.

**SLT or SALT:** Speech and Language Therapy/Therapist. **SLTA / SP:** Speech and Language Therapy Assistant / Support Practitioner.

**Sound System:** the sounds that a child is able to say and the sound combination rules the child makes use of.

**Syntax:** the rules of combining words to make a sentence (grammar).

**Verbal Communication:** the parts of communication which are language based. **Verbal Reasoning:** think about and solving problems using language.

**Visual Timetable:** the use of pictures and/or objects to represent different parts of a school day. **Vocabulary:** the store of words a child knows and uses.

**Voice Problem:** a problem with the quality (hoarse/husky), pitch (too high or too low) or volume (too loud or too quiet) of the voice or with the control of the breath for speech.

**Word Finding Difficulties:** inability to reliably retrieve a known target word from memory.