



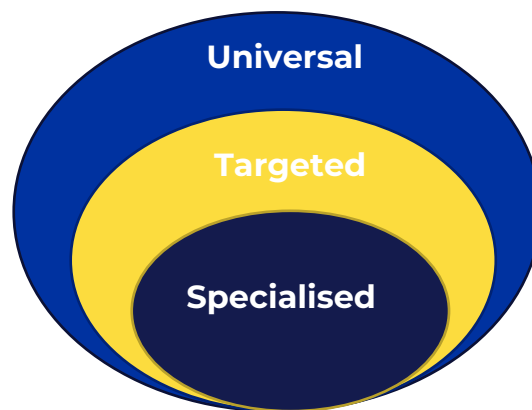
Asking for Help

Asking for help is an important life skill, however it is not always intuitive for students with language disorder. Some students may inaccurately believe that asking for help reflects negatively on their intelligence, skills, and abilities. However, the inability to effectively seek help can negatively affect students' academic performance and self-esteem. To support students when seeking help, a range of strategies can be implemented including universal, targeted, and individualised supports.

Keywords: *help, universal support, targeted support, individualised support.*

Levels of Support

Consider using various approaches to support students to seek help. These approaches can be broken down into three different levels: universal supports which may benefit all students, targeted supports which benefit students with more specific needs and specialised supports which benefit individual students.



Universal Supports

- Discuss the importance of asking for and seeking help with the whole class.
- Support students to understand that there are no 'silly' questions and that all questions are 'good' questions. It is also important to highlight how asking a question may support other students in the class who might have the same question.
- Ensure that all students understand the procedures for asking for help in the classroom, including how to ask for help in different types of activities (e.g., whole class, small group, and independent work).
- Make it Visual
 - Consider writing classroom instructions on the board and using a daily schedule. A whole classroom visual representing how to ask for help may be beneficial.



- Create a visual to support students to engage in self-help. Sample steps include:
 - o Highlight the key words
 - o Look at an example and go through the steps
 - o Copy the sample question and work through it
 - o Give myself a fresh start on a new piece of paper
 - o Mark the question with a star and come back to it later
- Respond positively and praise the class when they appropriately ask for help.

Targeted Supports:

- Consider grouping or pairing students who require a higher level of support with students who can serve as a positive role model and who can offer support. Rotate these peers regularly throughout the year, to provide students with the opportunity to develop a range of friendships with different peers.
- Consider your position in the classroom in relation to students who require additional help. If possible, place the student near the front of the room or towards your desk so that they can easily and more subtly access support if they need to.

Specialised Supports:

- Work with the student to identify personalised cues and prompts that they may use to seek help, such as help cards or help tokens on their desk. What might work for one student, may not work for another.
- When supporting a student to ask for help, consider teaching them specific phrases that they can use to request help, such as “I don’t understand what to do”, “I’m working hard, but I’m still not understanding _____. Can you please help me?” It may also help to role-play this kind of conversation to build comfort with using this language.
- Provide positive praise when a student seeks help. The most effective praise tells students exactly what they did well (e.g., “I love that you knew you needed help and you asked me! Awesome”) rather than global praise (e.g., “good work”). For a short time, focus more on providing praise for asking for help than for completing work. Consider implementing a reward system based on how many times they appropriately ask for help during the school day.

Want to learn more?

To learn more about Language Disorder and how to support children and young people for whom language is their primary disorder, please **contact us**. Language Disorder Australia provides holistic, innovative and effective therapy, education and support services and has a transdisciplinary team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, educators, psychologists and physiotherapists.

Contact: 1300 881 763 or hello@languagedisorder.org.au

Website: languagedisorder.org.au



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