

Researchers write ABCs of language disorder

July 12 2019, by Debora Van Brenk



Credit: Frontiers for Young Minds. "Developmental Language Disorder: The Childhood Condition We Need to Start Talking About"

While we expect to see scientists publishing in journals aimed at peers, a pair of Western researchers recently targeted a younger audience for their work—a lot younger.

Reviewers for their newest scholarly paper, "Developmental Language Disorder: The Childhood Condition We Need to Talk About," are ages 8, 10 and 13. When not reviewing [science papers](#) for *Frontiers for Young Minds*, young Amelie feeds elderly elephants in Thailand, while co-

reviewers Ari and Elliot describe themselves as "book hounds and lifelong neighbours."

Frontiers for Young Minds is an open-access science journal written for kids, reviewed and edited by kids. Recent articles included an exploration of star formation, innovations in brain-computer interface and parenting in invertebrate animals.

"Writing for Frontiers has been incredible," said Western graduate student Alyssa Kuiack, lead author of the paper, which she chose as part of her final project in Communication Sciences and Disorders professor Lisa Archibald's Speech Language Pathology class.

"We researchers get so caught up in our own jargon, our own terminology. It's good to hear someone say, "This doesn't make sense. This is above our vocabulary or understanding.""

Papers for the publication are all written by academic researchers and follow scientific method, including abstract, conflict-of-interest statement, references and citations.

"It's just a bit more reader-friendly, more accessible than traditional science journals," said Kuiack, a masters/Ph.D. student in Clinical Sciences in Speech Language Pathology/Speech Science.

People with [developmental language disorder](#) (DLD) struggle to learn and understand oral and written communication, despite their normal or above-normal intelligence. Their vocabulary and grammar fall below their classmates—with the result that they have difficulty grasping new material if it's taught in conventional ways, or showing in written form what they've learned.

DLD is a relatively recent term, having been endorsed in 2017 by a panel

of experts out of concern that a wide range of alternate terminologies was hampering diagnosis and treatment.

That's one reason Kuiack and Archibald wanted to reach younger readers.

"DLD is very common. If your class was made up of 28 students, there would be about two students in your class with DLD," the article explains.

The article identifies what the disorder is, who has it and how children, their families and teachers can work through it.

"It's so important to give kids this information because kids really aren't hearing it in their classrooms, even though they almost certainly have classmates with DLD," Kuiack said.

Added Archibald, "Equipping kids about their disorder is an important piece. Kids really need to be self-advocates, especially as they get older."

Writing science for younger readers also helps researchers hone their thoughts and communicate research clearly for a broader range of audiences, Archibald said. "It offers our students important practise in different kinds of writing."

Kuiack said the [review process](#) was similar to that of other journals, with questions and suggestions shared among reviewers and authors through a message board. She found the process all positive and said it's encouraging to be part of a journal that inspires a new generation of scientists.

More information: Alyssa Kuiack et al. Developmental Language Disorder: The Childhood Condition We Need to Start Talking About,

Frontiers for Young Minds (2019). [DOI: 10.3389/frym.2019.00094](https://doi.org/10.3389/frym.2019.00094) : kids.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/frym.2019.00094

Provided by University of Western Ontario

Citation: Researchers write ABCs of language disorder (2019, July 12) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-07-abcs-language-disorder.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--