

# Parent Support - Dyslexia.

Do you think your child may be experiencing a degree of dyslexia?

Does your child have a diagnosis of dyslexia?

What does this mean... and  
How can you help?



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# What is dyslexia?

- ▶ Dyslexia is present at birth – it is part of how your child’s brain has developed and so part of how your child is.
- ▶ It can be inherited.
- ▶ It is present in about 10% of the population.
- ▶ It is linked to difficulties learning to read, spell and write, and so does not become fully apparent until your child starts school and has had those formal learning opportunities.



Dyslexia is a spectrum condition – each dyslexic learner’s profile is different but all share the experience that learning to read, write and spell is difficult.



- ▶ It is also linked to strengths associated with the right side of the brain – creative and artistic



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- ▶ There are early indicators that you may have noticed and it will be important to share these with school

Your child may have been slow to develop language skills and vocabulary – s/he may confuse or mis-sequence sounds and so mis-pronounce words for example (common in very early stages of learning to speak)

**Refer to Early Indicators document**

- ▶ Most current research suggests that difficulties occur due to weak phonological processing skills.
- ▶ This means, difficulties working with the sounds that make up our language.
  
- ▶ So... :
  - segmenting words, blending sounds, isolating sounds in words
  - remembering verbal information, - what you hear or think of to write or say for example
  - working through and responding to information fluently

**Refer to Dyslexia Checklists from the British Dyslexia Association**

# Trade Offs

Not all children experience the same difficulties or to the same extent.

Many dyslexics have typically creative strengths... and most crucially, there is a huge place in the world for them.



Dyslexic brains are often better at:

- Hands-on learning
- Seeing the big picture – grasping meaning rather than structure
- Making intuitive links
- Creativity and use of imagination
- Spatial awareness, construction and design

# What can you do to help?

## Golden rules:

Be patient.

Be understanding.

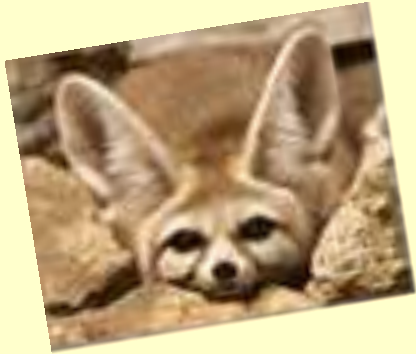
Your child will benefit greatly from

- learning a little about something before they are taught it at school
- over learning – going over the same words/ learning over and over again in as many different ways as possible
- being read to often – for enjoyment, and to develop vocabulary and language structures

Know that your child is not lazy, they will be working extra hard to make small steps of progress with reading, spelling and writing.

Make sure your child's:

...ears



and eyes



have been tested.

# Reading

**Reading is about building a store of words in long term memory ready to quickly recall when we see them**

Your child is likely to resist reading because s/he finds it difficult

**Don't fight it.**

**Some ideas:**

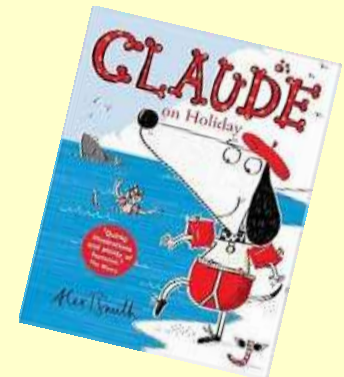
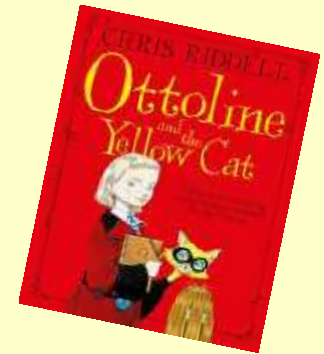
Read to her/him as much as you can - for pleasure, include books s/he may like to be able to read as well as easy reads.

Involve your child in the story as much as possible.

Talk about:

- what the book might be about
- the characters, the setting, the action/plot
- why characters behave the way they do
- what might happen next, and
- what makes us think that

When your child does feel able to read a little, take it in turns to read a word / sentence / page each





## If your child can't read a word whilst reading:

- ▶ count to 4 in your head
- ▶ then say it for her/him
- ▶ don't get hung up on unknown words
- ▶ quickly tell her/him what it means if needed



## To learn to read the word:

- ▶ have a word(s) of the week/day -taken from their reading if they like or word list from school
- ▶ check s/he can say words they couldn't read properly
- ▶ use 3D/magnetic letters (on your fridge perhaps) to make the word, break it up and put it back together again whilst continually saying the word – repeat...
- ▶ hide the letters in a left to right sequence around the room/house - find and make the word discussing what letter they are looking for next
- ▶ have a list of the words learnt stuck on the fridge or in a note book to go back to check

**Your child may be struggling to apply phonics to reading.**

# Reading using ICT

**For smaller amounts of text** - examples are:

- ▶ ClaroScanPen – an app which reads text that has been photographed  
– cost involved



- ▶ SEEINGAI – an app which reads text through the lens on your device with out the need for a photo – free



- ▶ Reading Pen – pen shaped device  
That you swipe over text and it will say the word /sentence – this one can be used in exams to read the occasional word or sentence  
School may be able to provide these – they are quite expensive



## **For longer pieces of text - examples are:**

- ▶ Natural Reader – free
- ▶ Balabolka – free
- ▶ Google Docs – screen reader via GoogleChrome

## **Consider audio books - examples are:**

- ▶ BorrowBox App – sign up free with local library [www.leics.gov.uk/library\\_services](http://www.leics.gov.uk/library_services)



- ▶ Listening Books – access to audio books for members who have dyslexia

[www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk)

# Spelling

**Spelling is having an image of the word stored in long term memory in order to recall it for fluent writing**

Perhaps you are having difficulty reading your child's writing because of bizarre spellings.

## **Some ideas:**

Focus on learning words which your child will need to use often e.g. words like: with, about, friend, etc. Check with spellings at school – can s/he spell all the first 200 words for example.

Ask your child to listen to all the sounds they can hear in the word before they have a go at writing it, or finding all the letters they need to make the word.

First decide: Does the word 'look right' ??

**t h a y**

Then, tick over all the letters that are correct and work out together what needs to change by comparing this word to the correct spelling



**t h a y** / **t h e y**

Write the correct word with letter(s) to learn in a different colour.

**t h e y**

Ask your child to take a photograph of the word in their mind.

It is important that as your child practices spelling a word that you keep asking them –

**‘What word are you writing/making?’**

- otherwise s/he may just be writing/organising a sequence of letters and not remember what the word is.

Practice making and breaking the word as for reading.

Use ‘Look Say Visualise Cover Remember Write Check’ methods.

Have spelling races with your child.



How many times can your child write the word on a small piece of paper?

The A+ spelling app is great and free from the App Store.



SIRI will always tell you how to spell a word.

# Two b/d strategies



1. Put pencil in writing hand
2. Have other hand , palm facing up
3. Curl fingers in
4. Lift thumb toward the sky
5. This makes 'b for right handers 'd' for left handers



Capital 'B' is usually well known.

Small 'b' is left when capital B's head is knocked off!

['d' is the other one, which will not fit inside]

For children having great difficulty remembering which is which, it is advised that only one is taught until firmly established, until this point, the other one is known as 'the other one'.

# Verbal memory



Perhaps when you ask your child to brush their teeth, put their coat on and find their shoes, that they find their shoes...  
and nothing else.

It may make you think that they are just not listening - (of course this may be the case in some instances), but it may well be that they really do not remember what they have to do.

Giving instructions one or two steps at a time, breaking information in to manageable chunks, giving a pre-warning and being prepared to calmly repeat information can all help.



# Speed of processing information



It may be that your child does not respond to what is being said as quickly as siblings or other children... it may make you think they do not understand or can not be bothered, but it may well be that they need longer and/or repetition to fully make sense of what they have heard, read and/or seen.

- ▶ try to give your child time to formulate answers and respond – pause for a few moments longer than you would usually
- ▶ engineer it so that friends/siblings give them a chance to talk
- ▶ prompt your child with what they might see or be asked in a few minutes time

# Concentration and Organisation

**Verbal memory difficulties?**

**Processing speed difficulties?**

It's no wonder dyslexic people appear to lack concentration and have poor organisational skills.

Sometimes the world comes at dyslexic people with too much information to take in, too quickly, and it can all get too much.

There is a need to feel safe, to have opportunities to find and utilise strengths, and to have support to lessen the impact of these weaker areas.

# Self – esteem

Children who find learning difficult are more likely to have negative feelings about themselves.

self-advocacy is actively promoted

needs are not hidden, they are out in the open

feeling positive about what they **can** do

dyslexia often enhances some areas of learning



experiencing things that interest them

strategies for learning are shared between child, home and school

having opportunities to be successful

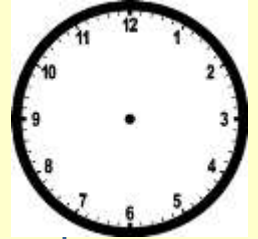
There are many famous dyslexics out there, but do you know anyone, or a few people in your family or community who could be role models for your child?

Maybe you, your partner or parents are dyslexic? Perhaps your mechanic, child's teacher, window cleaner, plumber, doctor, newsagent, is dyslexic.



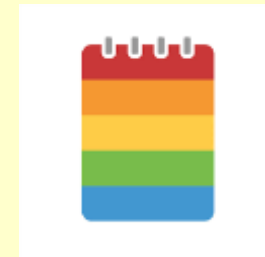
# Homework and Time Management

- ▶ Set up a routine which works for you and your child.
- ▶ Limit the amount of time if necessary – discuss with Class/subject teacher.
- ▶ Help your child to organise the homework – when it gets given out.....when it has to be handed in.



Many dyslexic people struggle with time management and the passing of time.

- ▶ Remind your child often of important dates and times as they approach using a calendar or diary to refer to.
- ▶ The colour coded timetable app may work well for your child.



# Developing independence

Be aware that it takes longer to complete activities such as writing, reading, and in daily life generally, and allow for that by not over filling your day/timetable.

Keep a timetable/diary handy and refer to it often.

Have bags 'ready to go' for activities that are coming up in the week.

At school feel confident to ask for a copy of a PowerPoint, or for something to be repeated, or for a writing frame, use of a laptop – what ever works best.

Make use of ICT. There are many voice to text and reading tools on the market that can really help dyslexic people access and produce text through speaking and listening, and, in their own time.

**Ensure your child knows their strengths and weaknesses and is able to be a self-advocate of their needs.**

# Transition



## Consider:

- What your child's school has in place – e.g. additional visits, meeting with learning support staff etc.
- What and How the SENCO passes over information regarding your child e.g. – is there a meeting – could you be present at that meeting?
- Contacting the new SENCO to arrange a meeting with you and your child.

# Some Frequently Asked Questions

Does a diagnosis of dyslexia mean that a school gets some extra money to help a child?

No.

Does a diagnosis of dyslexia mean that a student automatically gets extra time or a reader/scribe in formal tests/exams?

No. The pupil's needs would be looked at against the set criteria for access arrangements.



Does a school have to make a formal diagnosis of dyslexia?

No. The schools duty is 'to notice needs and make adjustments.'

However, where the child/young person and/or parents/carers express the view that a diagnostic assessment is necessary in order to meet the pupil's needs, schools must give this serious consideration.

“What matters most is to ensure that children's *difficulties with literacy learning are identified and addressed in ways that advance their progress*, whether or not the difficulties are described in terms of dyslexia”. Rose Review of Dyslexia (2009)

Does benefitting from an overlay mean that my child is dyslexic?

No. Your child may be able to see print better using a coloured overlay – this is not the answer to their difficulty and does not mean they are dyslexic.

- ▶ Dyslexia is not diagnosed by the use of an overlay, and nor is visual stress.
- ▶ Be aware that in a small number of instances there will be something else going on with vision which may require further investigation.
- ▶ Subtle visual difficulties do not always get picked up by some opticians.
- ▶ If in any doubt, find an optician who specialises in subtle vision impairments.

## What is a Dyslexia Diagnostic Assessment?

This is a comprehensive assessment.

It will investigate your child's learning background, underlying language and reasoning skills, cognitive processing abilities and attainments in literacy.

It will state whether dyslexia is present and give suggestions for next steps in learning and adjustments to teaching.

Only specialist assessors and educational psychologists can make a diagnosis of dyslexia.

**Always check credentials of assessors – Assessment Practicing Certificate (APC) from PATOSS or the BDA; or Health and Care Professionals Council (HPC) registered.**

# Useful contacts

- ▶ The Leicestershire Local Offer  
[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/local offer](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/localoffer)
- ▶ Leicestershire Dyslexia Association  
01509 213 262 [fiona\\_hossack@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fiona_hossack@yahoo.co.uk)
- ▶ [www.dyslex.io](http://www.dyslex.io) – powered by BDA
- ▶ [www.parentchampions.org.uk](http://www.parentchampions.org.uk) Has useful info including short films with practical tips to support primary and secondary aged children
- ▶ British Dyslexia Association  
[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)