

Dyslexia - information for parents

All children should gain satisfaction and confidence at school. However, if reading, writing, concentrating and remembering is causing your child to worry, lose confidence and to find ways to avoid school or school work, s/he will find it harder to learn. If you have identified that your child is experiencing difficulties, what should you do? The following hints and tips which might help guide you.

Be encouraging

You have a tremendous influence on your child's attitude to learning. Remind him/her that everyone is good at something and even though they find some things difficult, they have other strengths.

- ◆ Your child's success will be greatly increased if s/he feels confident
- ◆ If s/he feels confident, then s/he will not feel stupid
- ◆ If s/he feels confident, then s/he will keep trying



Be understanding

Remember that your child will be working harder than his/her classmates or siblings because of the processing difficulties associated with short term memory. This means s/he may come home exhausted, frustrated and possibly angry with him/herself and others. Your role is to provide as much praise as possible for what s/he has done well and to help him/her to stay organised.

Be supportive

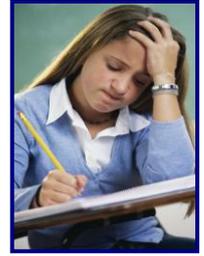
It is important to liaise with the class teacher and Support for Learning staff in order to maintain positive relationships with school. Share your concerns with the teacher and discuss ways to tackle problem areas together. It is not your child who is a problem nor is it dyslexia. If s/he learns in the way which suits him/her, then school work will not be as difficult.

Schools and local authorities have policies for working with children with additional support needs - you can ask for a copy.

Be patient

- ◆ Avoid failure at home, which should be a reassuring and supportive place
- ◆ Allow time to relax – your child will be tired after having to keep up with peers all day
- ◆ Give hints and reminders – being tired makes short term memory worse

- ◆ Be realistic about the time your child takes to complete homework. Discuss concerns about how long homework takes with class teacher
- ◆ Try doing homework in short blocks of 15-20 minutes. This can improve concentration



Be positive

- ◆ Encourage and praise him/her for all the things s/he does well
- ◆ Do not show your anxiety – be calm and encouraging
- ◆ Read longer texts to him/her and discuss how s/he will tackle them
- ◆ Give rewards – a computer game, TV programme, trip to the park
- ◆ Let him/her watch TV and discuss programmes with him/her. This may be supportive of your child's learning and could make it easier for him/her to retain information discussed

Be organised

- ◆ Establish a routine, with rest periods. You know your child and what suits best
- ◆ Create a clutter-free homework area at home, a particular room or space in the house which might aid focus and concentration
- ◆ Plan for breaks during homework, breaking large tasks down to manageable tasks
- ◆ Be aware of your child's school timetable to help with daily organisation
- ◆ If your child struggles to take a comprehensive note of homework, arrange for them to check with a classmate at the end of the day, or for the teacher to provide a written note
- ◆ Colour-coding different subjects may be useful. It might focus attention on the content, with the colour coding acting as a memory aid. Colour-coding a timetable can also help your child to pack the correct coursework and books each day

Looking for more in-depth information? Want to help your child at home?

- ◆ **Dyslexia: A Parent's Survival Guide** by Christine Ostler
- ◆ **Overcoming Dyslexia** by Beve Hornsby
- ◆ **Dyslexia: A Complete Guide for Parents and Those Who Help Them** by Dr. Gavin Reid
- ◆ **Dyslexia: A Parent's Guide** by Maria Chivers
- ◆ **How to Help your Dyslexic and Dyspraxic Child: A Practical Guide for Parents** by Sally McKeown
- ◆ **The Everything Parent's Guide to Children with Dyslexia: All you need to ensure your child's success** by Jody Swarbrick
- ◆ **Dyslexia and Us: A collection of personal stories** by Dyslexia Scotland
- ◆ www.dyslexic.com www.assist-it.org.uk www.callscotland.org.uk

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