

Parents supporting dyslexic children

Dyslexic people can be dogged by nagging uncertainty because of their difficulties. Parents can do a lot to support and encourage their children, boosting their self-esteem and confidence.



Organisation:

- a purse belt can be useful for money/keys
- attach purse/keys to school bag with a chain
- plastic pockets can be useful to keep worksheets, H/W sheets neat and tidy
- a suitable watch – either analogue or digital, whichever your child understands best
- encourage early use of word processor, as it aids spelling, presentation & organisation
- use a notice board (see below) at home
- name everything which goes to school with a permanent marker!
- gym kit often gets lost – label well, and have second-hand spares at home
- use a notice board or fridge/freezer & magnets:
 - stick up timetable of lessons, after-school activities, equipment
 - school calendar and a list of useful phone numbers/friends' numbers
 - use a biro on a string/Blu-tak & Post-It notes
 - stick up school letters, but remove when no longer relevant



Stationery

Don't spend vast sums on expensive stationery: it may get lost often.

A see-through pencil case which takes a 15cm ruler is ideal.

It should contain:

- a pen
- pencil sharpener
- rubber
- 4 sharp pencils
- 6 colouring crayons/felt pens
- a short ruler (which can be used as a place-holder when reading or copying)
- a pair of compasses with a short, sharp pencil
- a protractor, a small laminated tables square (if permitted)
- a small card: days of week and months of year, address and phone number if needed.



Any pen used must be one which is comfortable. Buy a selection of cheap ones – ink, biro, rollerball, gel – and find out which gives the best result. Buy plenty and stick to it.



Skills to practise at home

- learning the order of the days and months
- name, address and date of birth
- saying and writing the alphabet in order
- tying laces and ties
- practising reading, spellings and times tables

Don't over-work them: they need to relax as well!

Before School:

- organise enough time for breakfast – it will help
- get child to check timetable, school bag, equipment
- provide a mid-morning snack and drink
- set watch alarm if they have an appointment of any kind
- check school planner



After School:

- provide drink and snack when they get home, and allow time to unwind
- ask about any school notes or letters – check bag/planner
- if they are willing, ask about their day (use their timetable, to aid memory)

Bedtime

Dyslexic children can often become very tired after a day of concentrated work, plus homework. An adequate amount of sleep is important. Make sure there is time to unwind after doing H/W – story, video, bath, drink, music etc. Try to get things ready for next day, & avoid the morning rush.



Coping with problems

Be a caring parent, but not over-anxious – a difficult balance to strike! Try to keep life as normal as possible. Stay calm and take time out to relax yourself – it can be quite stressful supporting a dyslexic child, and even more so if you are dyslexic yourself.

Try not to pass on to your child any difficulties *you* may have had with school. Look at your child's experiences separately and try not to off-load your feelings onto them.

- Make sure teachers are aware of the **specific** difficulties your child has – not all dyslexic people are the same.
- Dyslexic children can sometimes be accused of lying because they have failed to grasp the issue, or may have forgotten the details and made up something to cover this, or confused the sequence of events. Explain to those involved how dyslexia may affect the situation, but don't let it be used as an excuse.
- Don't be afraid to make an appointment with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or head teacher to talk through any issues you may have. Use email if possible, as it is not always easy for staff to get to a phone.
- Do not compare your child with friends or siblings - everyone is an individual, and has their own strengths and weaknesses.



Homework

- ✓ have a specific place for H/W: a table, good lighting, equipment to hand
- ✓ let them do H/W after unwinding (perhaps after a meal)
- ✓ help with H/W if needed – don't take over, but remind and check
- ✓ encourage your child to develop their own routines and structures
- ✓ set a time limit for H/W, and if it takes longer, write a note to teachers
- ✓ write how long it took - in planner or on a Post-It note attached to H/W
- ✓ help with the mechanical copying work, but let your child do the thinking
- ✓ if you can't understand the task, ask teachers for clarification
- ✓ agree with the school how to help e.g. typing up written work and hand both in
- ✓ get teachers to write/type out H/W tasks, or allow more time for copying it down
- ✓ use alternative methods of recording information:
 - orally on mp3 player
 - doing a visual map (MindMap, spider diagram)
 - making a model
 - writing a table or a list



- ✓ if a piece of work is likely to have many errors, write on alternate lines to allow plenty of room for corrections - do not correct every piece of work for spelling
- ✓ if your child has been away from school, help them catch up with written notes by photocopying a friend's, or typing it up for them
- ✓ encourage proof-reading:
 - get them to read it aloud, to check for missing words, sense and punctuation
 - then read from the end backwards, to check each word for spelling
 - underline in pencil any words which they think don't look right, then check using a dictionary, or ask for help

