

Supporting Children with Dyslexia

A guide for school support staff



What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD). The word 'dyslexia' means 'difficulty with words'. A dyslexic person's ability to organise, read and spell is affected due to a difference in the area of the brain which deals with these processes. The degree of severity varies between individuals.

Dyslexia does not affect a person's intelligence and dyslexics can still be successful and achieve, given the right support.

Signs of dyslexia

- Difficulty reading, spelling and processing words quickly.
- Mismatch between oral ability and writing.
- Significant difference between literacy and non-literacy-related attainment.
- Problems with general organisation, sequencing, and following instructions.
- Print may appear to move on page and it can be difficult to keep place.
- Often reverses letters and numerals.
- May reverse whole words when reading or spelling, eg saw/was.
- Behaviour problems due to feeling of frustration.
- Tiredness due to extra concentration required.
- Late development of speech.
- Family history of literacy problems.





Strategies for supporting children

- Give support across the curriculum.
- Use multi-sensory approaches to teaching and learning.
- Teach a structured phonics programme.
- Provide word banks.
- Focus on child learning key words.
- Use spell checkers.
- Make sure pupils have a clear view of the board.
- Allow extra time for written responses.
- Act as a scribe when appropriate.
- Use of coloured pens and paper may help those who experience visual discomfort.
- Use overlays, line trackers and bookmarks if appropriate.
- Use alternative ways of recording that allow child to reflect their true ability, eg diagrams, digital voice recorders, etc.
- Voice recognition software may be useful.
- Provide aids for organisation, eg visual timetable.
- Keep instructions short and ask child to repeat them.
- Show pupil how to plan using mind maps, flow charts, etc.
- Praise child's effort.
- Mark work for level of understanding as well as content.
- Ask pupil which approaches are most helpful and encourage independence.
- Make the most of the child's strengths.



Useful books

How to Identify and Support Children with Dyslexia,
Chris Neanon. LDA, 2002.

*Overcoming Dyslexia: A straight-forward guide for
families and teachers*, B Hornsby. Vermilion, 1996

Useful contacts for information and resources

British Dyslexia Association
Unit 8 Bracknell Beeches
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