

The Village Academy



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH

DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Dyslexia

Dyslexia can be defined as significant and persistent difficulties with reading, spelling, writing and sometimes arithmetic. It occurs in spite of normal teaching and is independent of intellectual ability. There may be a family history of similar problems.

Characteristically children with dyslexia can have problems with auditory and visual processing as well as some of the following difficulties:

- Organisational problems
- Poor fine motor control
- Poor spoken and/or written language
- Poor concentration

When reading, the following may be noticed:

- Hesitant and laboured reading
- Words/whole lines omitted or repeated
- Over reliance on one cueing system, e.g. context, phonics etc.
- Visually similar words/letters confused, e.g. of/for, b/d, u/n
- Difficulties reading multisyllabic words
- Difficulty decoding shorter words
- The child may complain that words look blurred or appear to move on the page

During written work, the following may be noticed:

- Disparity between what the child can write and their spoken language
- Untidy work and use of 'camouflage strategies', i.e. covering possible mistakes with poor handwriting
- Slow and laborious writing which may be very small or large
- Confusion between upper and lower case letters
- Difficulties planning written work
- Difficulties copying from the board
- Difficulty taking notes
- Poor spelling which is often difficult to read

Literacy difficulties

The basic building blocks of literacy are the ability to decode (break down) and encode (blend) words. Children with literacy difficulties need to be targeted

specifically at developing these skills. Children with these difficulties require more repetition or over-learning than other children.

How to help your child

You have a tremendous influence on your child's attitude towards reading and writing. Your child's success will be greatly increased if he or she feels confident.

- Believe in them and show how proud you are of them.
- Praise them when they make an effort

Praise lets children know when they are doing the right things in learning to read, write or spell. Praise motivates them to keep on trying. When you praise your children it is important to tell them why you are pleased with them, and then they can see for themselves that what they are doing is right.

Strategies for reading

- Help to keep your child interested and enthusiastic about reading by giving him or her a wide range of reading materials, including comics/magazines etc.
- Make sure the book is not too difficult. Most of the words should be easy for your child. None of us understands or enjoys reading if it is too hard.

A simple way to assess whether a book is at a suitable level is to use:

THE FIVE FINGER TEST

The child is considered to be reading at frustration level if he/she makes more than one error in ten words. In order for a child to read with some independence the child has to be able to use many different reading skills. This can only be achieved if the text is at the correct reading level.

Select 50 words of text from the reading book

Child starts to read

When an error or long hesitation is made a finger is placed over the word.

If all the fingers are used up before the end of the text is reached then the text is too difficult.

If the child is taught to apply the five finger test when selecting text, then the books he or she chooses to read will be at a more appropriate level.

- Everybody enjoys being read to. If a child is interested, but can't read a particular book, read it to him or her.
- Share the reading – one sentence or paragraph each at a time.
- Post-it notes can be transferred to the top of each page, showing b/d to enable the child to differentiate between the two.
- Coloured overlays and reading rules can be used to enable the child to keep his/her place when reading.
- Correct your child only if the meaning is lost or changed.
- If your child is stuck on a word, leave it out and encourage them to read to the end of the sentence. Then let him/her have a go at the unknown word, using the first letter and comprehension of the sentence as a help. If this doesn't work – give the word.
- People with dyslexia often find it easier to read when the text is on buff coloured paper rather than white, as this prevents glare.
- Books on CDs encourage a love of books. Alternatively, you may be able to subscribe to <http://www.listening-books.org.uk/>. The fee is presently £20 per annum.
- Assist with the reading of textbooks, worksheets etc. when requested.
- Assist in the learning of the meaning of key words for the units being covered.

Most of all, regardless of the age of the child, make reading fun and enjoyable!

Strategies for spelling

- Make the words using magnetic/foam/wooden letters.
- Encourage the child to 'try out' spellings to see if they look right.
- Do not correct all spellings. Correct only a few, concentrating on the High Frequency Words (at the back of booklet).

- Encourage the use of a key word list – it could be kept in a pocket at the front or back of the exercise book concerned.
- Encourage the child to look through their work and try to identify words that are spelled incorrectly or he/she is not sure about.
- Encourage use of an electronic spellchecker or dictionary (Ace dictionary and Perfect Spelling dictionaries are both particularly designed for dyslexic students.)

Methods to learn spellings

Ask your child to count the number of syllables (parts in the word), i.e.

Continent = 3 syllables con tin ent

Ask your child to write 3 dashes

– – –

Remind him/her of the rule in English that every syllable must have a vowel.

Ask your child to write the vowel that he/she can hear for each syllable, i.e.

o i n

Then ask your child to add the consonants that he/she can hear on either side of the vowel con tin ent

Look, Cover, Write, Check (LCWC)

See blank sheet at back of booklet.

- Write the word correctly for your child
- Let him/her look at it for about 10 seconds
- Cover the word
- Child writes the word, counts the letters, draws around the word and notes shape
- Check the correct spelling
- Repeat until correct

Mnemonics

- Relies on listening for meaningful (although perhaps silly) sentences

- They can be more powerful if they are absurd or amusing or accompanied by a picture.
- It helps if the first word is the word to be spelled, e.g. 'Does Oliver Eat Sweets?' – DOES

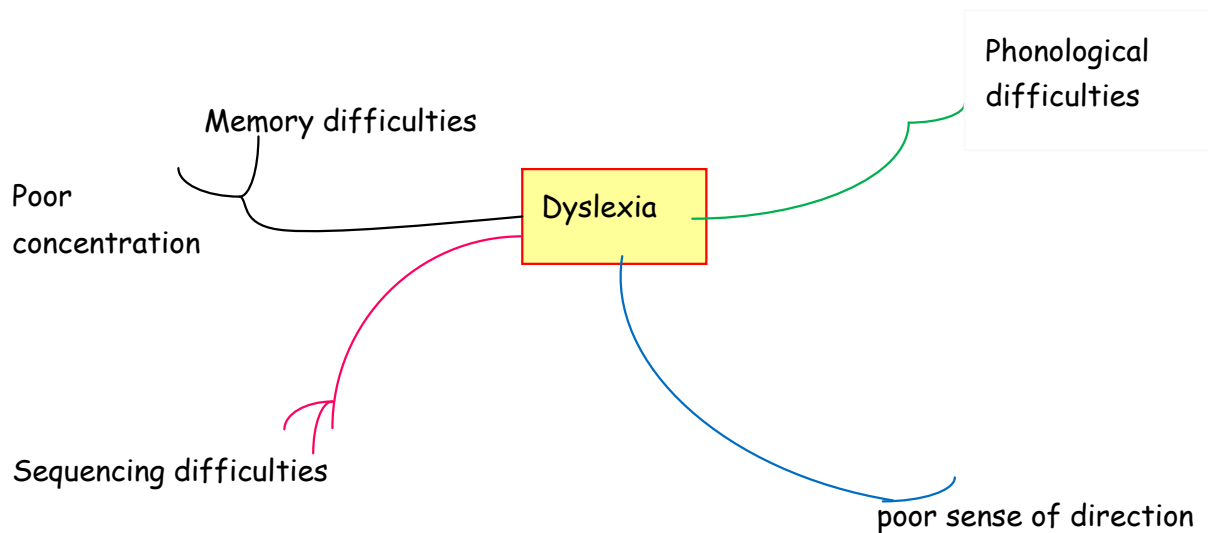
Words within words

- Relies on visual memory
- Identify the small word within words. For example, where is the 'hat' in 'what' and 'to' 'get' 'her' for 'together'.
- You 'hear' with your 'ear'
- 'You' are 'young'
- On SatURday U R at home
- Underline the word/s
- Write the word from memory

Organisation and study skills

Mind mapping

- A Mind Map TM is an easy way to get information into and out of your brain
- It is the best way of coming up with new ideas and planning objects
- It is made up of words, colours, lines and pictures. It is very easy to construct.
- Your brain thinks in colours and pictures.
- Mind mapping is taking the main ideas as lines from a central subject and then showing other points from these as branches from these lines



Flowcharts

- This is a good way of organising ideas in a logical way

Post-it/sticky notes

- Encourage your child to write one idea or event in a story on each post-it note and then organise in sequence

Computers and literacy skills

Word processing is really helpful for the dyslexic child for many reasons:

- It is easier and quicker to press a key than to form a letter
- Typing looks good throughout the text and the child ends up with a piece of work he/she can be proud of
- Print on the screen or on paper looks more like the printed form in which we usually see words, so dyslexic pupils are more likely to see mistakes
- Dyslexic pupils won't mind having a go on a word processor because it is easier to edit mistakes using the spell check.
- Random thoughts, words or paragraphs can be moved and put into order
- Word processed work is easier to read for children and teachers

Homework

- In most instances it is acceptable for your child to word process homework unless occasionally specifically asked to write by hand.
- Follow the suggestions listed above to support with spelling.
- Encourage your child to proof read work. Sometimes it can help to read it aloud. When looking for spelling mistakes try starting at the right hand side of the page so you are only thinking about the spelling not the meaning.

High Frequency Words

Reception year

I	go	come	went	up	you	day	was
look	are	the	of	we	this	dog	me
like	going	big	she	and	they	my	see
on	away	mum	it	at	play	no	yes
for	a	dad	can	he	am	all	
is	cat	get	said	to	in		

Year 1 to 2

about	can't	her	many	over	then	who
after	could	here	may	people	there	will
again	did	him	more	push	these	with
an	do	his	much	pull	three	would
another	don't	home	must	put	time	your
as	dig	house	name	ran	too	
back	door	how	new	saw	took	
ball	down	if	next	school	tree	
be	first	jump	night	seen	two	
because	from	just	not	should	us	
bed	girl	last	now	sister	very	
been	good	laugh	off	so	want	
boy	got	little	old	some	water	
brother	had	live(d)	once	take	way	
but	half	love	one	than	were	
by	has	made	or	that	what	
call(ed)	have	make	our	their	when	
came	help	man	out	them	where	

Plus:

- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- Numbers to twenty
- Common colour words
- Pupil's name and address
- Name and address of school

Useful websites for further information and resources

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

www.beingdyslexic.co.uk

www.crossboweducation.com

www.listening-books.org.uk

www.bbc.co.uk

From **Teaching Spelling to English Language Learners** ©Johanna Stirling 2010

For more great spelling resources visit **The Spelling Blog** <http://thespellingblog.blogspot.com> and **The English Language Garden** <http://www.elgweb.net>

Print this page. Cut out the card and laminate it if possible. Use it with the template above.

LOOK SAY COVER WRITE CHECK				
COVER CARD				
Copy & Say the word	Count letters	What's funny?	How to remember	Word shape
<p>Copy the word very carefully.</p> <p>Say the word.</p> <p>Say the letters of the word.</p> <p>Count the number of letters in the word. Write the number in the next column. Check it's the same as in the word you copied.</p>	<p>Write how many letters there are in the word.</p>	<p>Write which parts of the word might be difficult to remember. Think about letters that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - silent - double - 2 vowels etc 	<p>Some ideas to help you remember the spelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar to another word - Another word inside it - Mnemonic - Origin - Common <p>letter string - Sound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your own ideas 	<p>Write the word carefully in the middle row. Tall letters (b,d, f, h, k, l, t) reach into the top row. The ones that drop below the line (g, j, p, q, y) reach into the bottom row..</p> <p>Draw around the outline of the word.</p> <p>Look away from the paper and try to 'see' the word in your head.</p>

THEN

Cover your work with this card.

Try to '**see**' the word in your head again and **write** it in the next column.

Lift the card. **Check** your spelling.

If it's right, **tick** (✓) the next column.

If it's wrong, cross it out, look carefully at the correct spelling again, then cover and write in the next column.

If it's right, tick (✓) the next column.

Try again later.

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