



**Denny**  
High School Est. 1889

Integrated Pupil Support

# Defying Dyslexia

## Parent Booklet



# What is dyslexia?

It is estimated that 1 in 10 people has dyslexia. Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and backgrounds. Dyslexia often runs in the family. There is no 'cure' but lots of practical things can help overcome some of the barriers it presents. Dyslexia is a learning 'difference', which means that the brain can approach things in a different way to other people. Dyslexia can affect the way people communicate, and is different for everyone. It is not just about reading and writing and it has nothing to do with intelligence. Dyslexia is classed as a disability under the Equality Act.

Unidentified, dyslexia can result in low self-esteem, stress, behavioural problems, and underachievement. But with the right support, children and adults with dyslexia can reach their potential. Learners with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching. Adults with dyslexia will benefit from reasonable adjustments in the workplace such as using assistive technology.

## Strengths associated with Dyslexia

Can be very creative and good at practical tasks.



Strong visual thinking skills such as being able to visualise a structure from plans.



Good verbal skills and social interaction.



Good at problem solving, thinking outside the box, seeing 'the whole picture'.



## Difficulties associated with Dyslexia

Problems with reading, taking notes, remembering numbers, names and details.



123

Difficulty with time keeping, organising work or managing projects.



ABC

Difficulties with spelling and writing.



Short-term memory problems and sequencing difficulties such as following instructions or directions.

It is important to remember that everyone with dyslexia is different and that they will not necessarily experience all of the things above. Everyone has different strengths, difficulties and strategies that work for them.

# Dyslexia: Information for Parents

Children,  
Parents &  
Teachers

If dyslexia is making it hard for your child to do well at school or if they are losing confidence or avoiding school work, what can you do? The following tips might help.

## Be understanding

Remember that your child will be working harder than their classmates or siblings because of the processing difficulties associated with short term memory. This means that they may come home exhausted, frustrated and possibly angry with themselves and others. Your role is to provide as much praise as possible for what they have done well and help them stay organised.

## Be encouraging

You have a tremendous influence on your child's attitude to learning. Remind them 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 they feel confident.
- If they feel confident then they will not feel 'stupid'.
- If they feel confident then they will keep trying.

## 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 your child can learn in the way that suits them, 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

- Try to avoid failure at home, which should be a reassuring and supportive place.
- Allow time to relax - your child will be tired after trying to keep up 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 the class teacher.
- Try doing homework in short blocks of 15 - 20 minutes to improve concentration.

## Be positive

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

Encourage and praise your child for all the things they do well.

## Be organised

- Establish a routine, with rest periods. You know your child and what suits best.
- Create a clutter-free homework area at home to help with focus and concentration.
- Plan for breaks during homework, breaking large tasks down to manageable tasks.
- Make sure you are familiar with your child's school timetable so you can help with daily organisation.
- If your child struggles to properly record their 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 or a timetable may be useful and help your child to pack the correct coursework, books and equipment each day.

## Further information

- 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
- Taking the Hell out of Homework by Neil Mackay
- The Everything Parent's Guide to Children with Dyslexia: All you need to ensure your child's success by Jody Swarbrick
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484 or [helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk)



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# Explaining dyslexia to children

Children,  
Parents &  
Teachers

Every child is different and dyslexia will affect them in different ways. Understanding dyslexia can be confusing for adults as well as children so it is important to talk about it, even if you don't know all the answers.

Tell your child that they learn in a different way and so it will help them to be taught in different ways. Explain that dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence.

Children can feel different emotions when they are told that they have dyslexia. Some see it as a good thing because it explains why they have been having difficulties. They may be relieved. Others might feel that they are 'different' from their classmates.

Lots of people have dyslexia – 1 in 10 people – and it can be quite mild or quite severe. There are lots of things that can help children with dyslexia do well in education, enjoy their hobbies and get a good job. Dyslexia should not hold anyone back from doing whatever they want to do.

**There can be positive things about dyslexia which might include:**

- strong visualisation skills (good for art, science, crafts, engineering)
- strong problem-solving skills
- strong interpersonal skills.

**Things that can be hard for children with dyslexia:**

- poor memory, organisation and sequencing problems (putting things in order or following patterns)
- difficulties with reading, writing and sometimes maths
- being organised
- extra effort is needed to do some things which is very tiring.

**However, it is important to stress that there are ways round these things.**

**Try these steps:**

- talk about dyslexia in a positive way
- say you don't know all the answers because everyone is different but that you will find out together
- find information from places like the internet, books, other people, Dyslexia Scotland's website, Helpline and publications
- ask your child what they find easy as well as what is difficult
- look at each task and work out with your child why something is easy or hard
- talk about other things as well because they are also important to your child
- make sure the school has all the information they need about your child. Help your child to write or speak about what dyslexia means to them and what helps. This will help classmates as well as teachers understand and help keep a positive 'can do' attitude.
- include brothers, sisters and other family members so they understand the positives and negatives and can help.

[www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)



Here are some things parents have said to us:

“I didn’t want to gloss over the fact that having dyslexia is challenging when it comes to school work but I also wanted to focus on what she could do well, how her thinking was different and how she could use her strengths to get where she wants to be. She said it helped her because she stopped seeing her problems as hurdles to struggle over but more of an interesting set of gates to open.”

“When talking about dyslexia with my son I talked a lot about him being intelligent as he thought he wasn’t and was feeling so bad about himself and calling himself stupid all the time.”

“My daughter gets frustrated when people say ‘learning difficulty’. It really should be a learning difference – she says nothing is difficult if you teach it to her in her learning style.”

## Books and resources that can help

- Dyslexia Unwrapped, a website for children aged 8+ [dyslexiascotland.org.uk/unwrapped](http://dyslexiascotland.org.uk/unwrapped)
- ‘So, you think you’ve got problems?’ by Rosalind Birkett
- ‘Dyslexia – Talking it Through’ by Althea
- ‘Brian has dyslexia’ by Jenny Leigh
- ‘My Little Brother’ by Chieko Tateno
- ‘Dyslexia Explained’ by Nesy.com
- ‘Dyslexia: A Teenager’s Guide’ by Dr Sylvia Moody
- ‘The Teenage Guide to Stress’ by Nicola Morgan
- ‘Dyslexia: A Parent’s Survival Guide’ by Christine Ostler



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All of Dyslexia Scotland’s leaflets can be downloaded free from our website at [www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/leaflets](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/leaflets).

Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484  
or [helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

# Dyslexia-friendly formats

Thinking about the presentation and layout of information will help make it more accessible. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Use pastel shades of paper (cream is a good alternative to white).
- Matt paper reduces 'glare'.
- Avoid black text on a white background.
- Use text font size 12 or above.
- Use fonts which are clear, rounded and have a space between letters, such as:

**Century Gothic**

**Comic Sans**

**Arial**

**Verdana**

**Tahoma**

There are also fonts that are similar to a handwritten style, or ones that might be more 'dyslexia friendly' such as:

**DK Cool Crayon**

**Dyslexie font**

(You can find free or low cost fonts like these in Microsoft Word or online)

- Use 1.5 or double line spacing and make sure margins are wide enough.
- Use lower case rather than capital letters.
- Use numbers or bullet points rather than continuous prose - but avoid using multiple levels of bullet points.
- Avoid the use of background graphics with text over the top.
- Use text boxes or borders for headings or to highlight important text.
- Use single colour backgrounds and avoid patterns and graduated colour.
- Avoid underlining and italics.
- Use bold text for titles and sub-headings or to draw attention to important information or key vocabulary.
- Colour-code text - for example, information in one colour, questions in another.
- Include simple flow charts, illustrations and diagrams to break up large sections of text or to demonstrate a particular procedure.
- Left justify text.



- Ensure that data, charts and diagrams are logical and easy to follow.
- Sentences and written instructions should be short and simple.
- Keep paragraphs short – dense blocks of text are difficult to read.
- Avoid too much text on the page. Make sure that it isn't too cluttered.

If in doubt, ask the person what they prefer.

Everyone is different but relatively simple changes can make a big difference, not just to people with dyslexia.



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# Ideas for supporting children and young people with reading

## Before you start, try to find out whether the reading difficulties are:

- inability to track along the line of words
- letters seeming to move
- inability to concentrate for long
- not knowing the sounds groups of letters make (phonics)
- not matching meaning to words
- guessing words from the first letter(s)
- fear of failing.

## General rules

- Keep it fun – don't put pressure on the child and don't expect too much too soon.
- Practise what they know first to improve confidence – this will help them feel good.
- Praise what is done well and comment on how they have done it.  
For example: 'Well done – you broke that word down really well.'
- Be ready to give help at the right time – don't let them panic and give hints to help, such as: 'That word rhymes with...'  
or 'Sound out the first letter.'
- Before reading, talk about the pictures, headings and titles.
- Stop when they have had enough.



## How to help primary school pupils

- Find a quiet time to look at books together.
- Choose books that have a high interest level for the child.
- Encourage them to try to decode words (break them down).
- Praise them for attempting words, even if they are wrong. Always look for the things they can do, rather than the ones they cannot.
- Help the child when they get to a difficult word by reading the word with them. This will help them to focus on the story, and they won't forget what they have just read.
- Take turns reading – like a line or sentence each. This can help your child become more aware of sentence structure and punctuation.
- Act out the story as you read by using different voices and encourage the child to do the same.
- Play 'knock-knock' when reading – your child can knock on the table when they find a difficult word. You can do it too when it's your turn to encourage them.
- Buy some lower case letters made from plastic or foam, or make some from play-doh. Play games with your child to help them match the letter symbol to the sound they hear.
- Talk about letter sounds rather than letter names with your child. Use 'a' like the first sound in 'apple' and not 'ay' like the name of it in ABC.
- Make a cardboard fish, attach some magnets and 'fish' for the sound you call out.
- Make or buy lotto sound bingo where your child must cover the letter they hear.
- Talk about how letters blend together to make other sounds. Many children have difficulty with 'br' and 'bl' in words like brown and bring or black and blend. Some other blends to look out for are 'gr', 'gl', 'tr', 'sp', 'st' and also 'str', 'spr', and 'ch', 'sh' and 'th'.
- Make duplicate cards of difficult words and play snap or pairs to help with memory.
- Buy or make pictures or so that your child can match a picture of an apple with the letter 'a', or an umbrella with the letter 'u'. Develop the task by matching pictures to full words or encourage the child to use individual letters to create the full word.
- Identify books with repetitive phrases where your child can build their confidence by being able to predict when the phrase will next come up.
- Bring reading into everyday activities by encouraging your child to read information on things like cereal packets, street signs, supermarkets, TV guides, recipes and so on.
- Allow your child to enjoy stories and books through audio books and eBooks where they can follow the words as they are being read aloud.
- Don't advance the level of reading until the child is ready to do so.
- Request word lists from teachers in advance to give the child extra time to practise.



## How to help secondary school pupils

- Use any appropriate suggestions from the section above.
- Read newspaper articles together and talk about what they mean.
- If they are reading books which have been made into a play or film, encourage them to watch it. This may give them a better grasp of the storyline and raise their level of understanding. Check with the class teacher beforehand to see what they might recommend.
- Try to make reading fun by not just reading 'school books'. For example is your child a budding comedian (joke books), are they interested in people's lives (autobiographies). If they have an interest in specific topics like sports, fashion, animals or history, find books that reflect this. It can also be useful to buy books that accompany television programmes such as 'Planet Earth' or 'Doctor Who.'
- Explore other methods for studying such as researching clips from YouTube, accessing electronic versions of study guides and using text to speech technology.



# Ideas for supporting spelling

Children,  
Parents &  
Teachers

## Before you start

- Try to establish whether your child's difficulties are with specific words, sounds or blends.
- Find out how the school is approaching the spelling difficulty – perhaps you could be supporting your child by using the same message at home.
- Be aware of the words being used within the classroom. Get lists from the teacher and suggest having access to these words in advance to allow more preparation and learning time for your child.

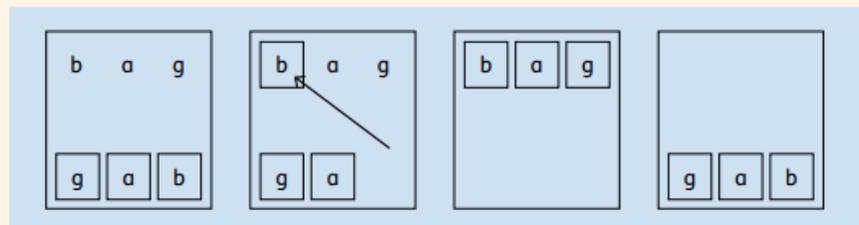
## Spelling with the child

- Having fun is important – be creative in this task.
- Create a multi sensory approach to spelling – planning, making, seeing, doing, reading, hearing. By using these skills, your child will be given a wider 'experience' of the words you are working on, which will help their memory.
- Be aware of concentration dropping and don't push too hard when tired.
- Begin with already known words before starting with new ones.
- Involve them in working on words that interest them – their own name, their address, their siblings or friends names, their favourite food, film or computer game. Perhaps 'trade' with them... one word they want, and one word for school.
- Take time to practise these activities in as many different environments as possible – in the kitchen using magnets on the fridge, at the table, playing scrabble as a family, doing word searches, in the car – incorporating in a game of 'I spy'.



## How to help at primary school

- Write letters or words in large print in mud or chalk outside and wipe them out with water from a water pistol when he has read them. Or use the water pistol to create letters. This is very good for active children.
- Make cards with individual letters written on them. Write out the individual words from your child's spelling list. Using the letters, match them to words, as shown below. Encourage them to match the letters to the written word several times, before removing the written word, so they are arranging the word without the prompt of the full word. This may help your child with spelling, and in turn writing, and reading.



- The above activity could also be done by using a white board or chalk board, which can be easily found at the supermarket, toy shop.
- The difficulty level can be altered by beginning with the individual letters in the correct order, before shuffling them, or by having additional letters present.
- Encourage your child to feel the letters, trace them with their hands. Do this with their eyes open and closed – this may help them retain this information in their memory.

## How to help at secondary school

- Show your child how to use a spell checker. This may take several attempts over a period of months before they are confident to use it independently.
- Teach your child mnemonics. For example: 'because' – Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants; any – 'Ants Never Yawn'.
- Encourage your child to use appropriate technology that may have been recommended by school. The more they persevere and understand the benefits, the more likely they are to use the equipment at school and home. Help them to develop fast, accurate keyboard skills.
- Teach your child how to use a dictionary – there are dictionaries which are specifically designed for individuals with dyslexia which may be worth exploring such as ACE Spelling Dictionary. Also explore 'visual dictionaries' and electronic spellcheckers (make sure these use 'aural spelling').
- Some people find it hard to focus when there is a quiet room – so perhaps having music on as background noise may increase concentration.



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# Dyslexia and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT can help children and adults in education, at work and at home by helping address many difficulties associated with dyslexia.

## 'Text-to-Speech' Software

This can be used to create a spoken sound version of the text in a computer document such as a Word file. This allows you to hear the text you are looking at. 'The Scottish Voice' ([www.thescottishvoice.org.uk](http://www.thescottishvoice.org.uk)) is a free high-quality computer voice downloadable from CALL Scotland. Once installed, it can be used with most text to speech programs, electronic books, PDF files and other Word documents.

## Spellcheckers

As well as general spellcheckers such as Microsoft Word which also shows possible grammatical errors, there are more specialist spellcheckers which deal with phonic approximations better than Word does. They also offer a better range of alternatives. Using 'Autocorrect' can help with correcting commonly mis-typed words.

Some software programmes predict what you are typing and complete the word or phrase for you. Words that you use regularly can be added to the programme.

## Virtual overlays

Some people with dyslexia find that the glare of text on a white background causes visual stress. This can make it uncomfortable to read and can in some cases distort the text or cause it to move. In some cases, coloured overlays can help with this. Virtual overlays in a range of colours can be used on a computer or other device to reduce this problem.

## 'Speech Recognition' Software

Sometimes called Voice-to-Text, this converts spoken words to written text. This allows you to talk to the computer and your words appear in the correct spelling on the screen so you don't have to physically type.

Basic versions of Text-to-Speech and Speech-Recognition Software are built into Windows from XP upwards.

## Screen settings

Screen settings such as coloured backgrounds and changing the size, font and colour of the text can be modified on a personal computer to suit the user. These can also be changed in your web browser to suit your needs.

## Touch typing

For some people, being able to touch type can be very helpful as it frees the brain to focus on the content of what is being written rather than the actual process of writing text. Learning to touch type can take a while, but there are many advantages for children and adults with dyslexia.

## Apps for dyslexia

If you have a smart phone there are a variety of free and low cost Apps you can download to help with reading, writing, numbers and organisation. You can also use Apps on tablet computers.

EduApps ([www.eduapps.org](http://www.eduapps.org)) is a collection of free downloadable software including examples of many of the features mentioned here. CALL Scotland's 'Wheel of Apps' for dyslexia lists iPad and Android Apps for learners with reading and writing difficulties.

## Smart pens

A Smart Pen is a writing tool that records spoken words and synchronises them with notes written on special paper. This could be used, for example by a student to record a lecture and replay any part of it later by tapping the pen on words written throughout the class. Information recorded can be transferred to a computer.

## Further information

- CALL Scotland – technology for people with communication difficulties [www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk) – see their 'Wheels of Apps' on this website
- Ability Net – adapting and adjusting technology [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)
- Online Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit – this free resource includes a section about technology. The homepage of the toolkit is at [www.addressingdyslexia.org](http://www.addressingdyslexia.org)
- BDA Tech – British Dyslexia Association list of popular software [www.bdatech.org](http://www.bdatech.org)
- Iansyst – assistive technology and disability services suppliers [www.iansyst.co.uk](http://www.iansyst.co.uk)
- Crick Software – educational software [www.cricksoft.com](http://www.cricksoft.com)
- Concept Northern – supporting people in employment, education and at home [www.conceptnorthern.co.uk](http://www.conceptnorthern.co.uk)
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484 or [helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

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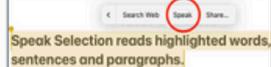
# Using the iPad's built-in tools to support literacy difficulties

iOS for iPad and the iPhone include a range of great tools to support literacy. Unless stated most of the tools can be found in Settings > Accessibility > Spoken Content.



## Speak Selection

Tap to select a word, sentence or paragraph and select 'Speak' from the menu to hear it spoken aloud. Turn on Speak Selection in Spoken Content.



## Speak Screen

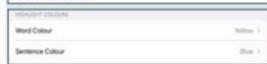
Speak Screen reads the entire screen. Swipe down from the top with two fingers from the top of the screen or use **Speech Controller**. You can choose different voices and speaking rates.



## Highlight Content

Highlight Content helps you to follow or focus on words and sentences as they are read aloud. Choose from different foreground and background colours.

**Highlight Content - track or focus on words and sentences as they are read aloud.**



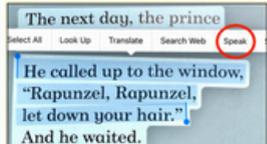
## Typing Feedback

Character and words are spoken aloud as they are typed, providing immediate feedback, helping to support spelling difficulties.



## Live Text

Live Text recognises and reads out text in photos or videos. You can use Live Text in the Camera and Photos apps - take a photo of a worksheet or a page from a book and tap the Live Text icon.



Turn on Live Text in **Settings > General > Language & Region**.

Look for the Live Text icon.

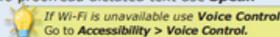
## Look Up and Translate

Use Look Up to define words and Translate to translate text into other languages.



## Siri and Voice Typing

You can use Siri to ask questions, set reminders, open apps, complete tasks, and dictate text instead of typing. To proofread dictated text use **Speak Screen** or **Speak Selection**.

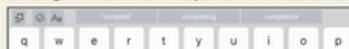


## Siri Voices

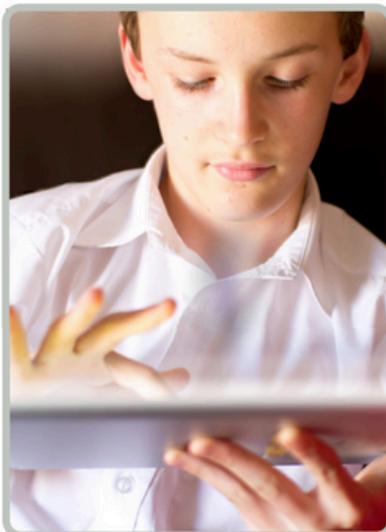
Use the natural Male and Female sounding voices.

## Predictive

Use Predictive to tap a word from a list of words appearing above the on-screen keyboard - **Settings > General > Keyboard > Predictive**.



**Hold to Speak Predictions** - tap and hold to hear each word spoken aloud - **Spoken Content > Typing Feedback**.



## Check Spelling

Consider turning on Check Spelling (in General and Keyboards) to alert learners to spelling mistakes. Misspelt words are highlighted with a red underline.

I recieved the parcel yesterday

## Replace Spelling

Tap or highlight the misspelt word to replace it with a correctly spelt word. If you are unsure if the replaced word is the correct one, highlight the word to have it read or spell aloud (Speak and Spell).

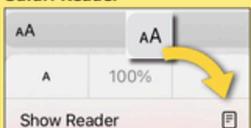


## Colour Filters



Colour Filters places a mask or screen tint over the iPad screen. You can choose different colour tints and adjust the hue and intensity. **Accessibility > Display & Text Size > Colour Filters**.

## Safari Reader



Improve the readability of web pages by removing clutter - tap the 'Double A' icon on the left hand side of the URL box.

## Multitasking; Split View & Stage Manager

View two or more apps at the same time using Split View or Stage Manager - ideal for reading/writing without toggling between apps.



**Settings > Home Screen & Multitasking**.

iPad to support literacy video guides



## 3rd Party Keyboards

You can use 3rd Party keyboards such as Keedogo, SuperKeys, Swype to aid writing and improve readability (Settings and Keyboard).

