

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.