



# Dyslexia

An information booklet for parents/carers on Dyslexia

## What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia causes difficulty in learning to read, write and spell. Short term memory, mathematics, concentration, personal organisation and sequencing may also be affected. 10% of the British population are dyslexic, 4% severely so.

Dyslexia usually arises from a weakness in the processing of language-based information. Biological in origin, it tends to run in families, but environmental factors also contribute.



Dyslexia can occur at any level of intellectual ability. It is not the result of poor motivation, emotional disturbance, sensory impairment or lack of opportunities, but it may occur alongside any of these. Dyslexia often co-occurs with related conditions such as dyspraxia, dyscalculia and Attention Deficit Disorder.

The effect of dyslexia can be largely overcome by specialist teaching and the use of compensatory strategies. Dyslexic people often have strong visual, creative and problem solving skills.

## Common Dyslexic Strengths

- Articulate
- Sense of humour
- Curiosity and interest
- Creative/ Inventive
- Practical
- Intelligent
- Frequent interest in science/ computing



## Common difficulties

- Dyslexic children are often late in learning to read and spell
- Often have difficulty with naming tasks
- Sometimes have difficulty detecting rhyme
- They are weak at memory tasks e.g. recalling a sequence of numbers presented orally
- Often find mental arithmetic difficult
- Have difficulty learning sequences such as months of the year and multiplication tables
- Slow in learning material presented exclusively in written form
- Reading, spelling and writing maths words
- Reading numbers and reversing numbers
- Connecting the correct symbol to the word read e.g. add means using the symbol +
- Remembering number bonds and understanding place value
- Recognising the decimal point and using a calculator correctly
- Understanding percentages and fractions
- An inability to transfer skills from one topic to another
- Lack of confidence which can slow them down

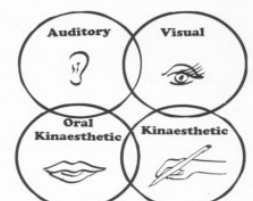


## Multi-sensory teaching

- Multi-sensory techniques use more than one sensory channel for input of information
- Multi sensory teaching reinforces learning through the simultaneous use of the visual, auditory and motor channels

The four main channels of learning are:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Oral Kinaesthetic
- Kinaesthetic (by touch or feel)



## Visual Processing Difficulties

- Lack of directional control (reading left to right)
- Poor word recognition (even familiar words)
- Poor memory for letters and for spelling patterns
- Visual distractions

## Motor Skills Difficulties

- Fine motor control
- Messy eating, using cutlery
- Using scissors, rubber, pencil, tracing
- Tying shoe laces



## Auditory Processing Difficulties

- Poor short term verbal memory span
- Repeating messages
- Following a series of instructions
- Learning or repeating rhymes
- Clapping or beating time to music
- Remembering common sequences
- Difficulty in taking notes in class

## Speaking and Listening Difficulties

- Mumbling
- Jerky
- Non-fluent

## Thought Processing Difficulties

Sequencing and organising which relies on working memory

## Ways to help at home

- Maintain or build self esteem and confidence
- Be encouraging and find things that the child is good at - praise for effort
- Provide support for homework (but don't write your child's work or do the maths homework)
- Help your child to be organised, establish a sensible routine
- Encourage hobbies, interests and out of school activities and find time to listen
- Try to find ways of enjoying books together
- Where possible involve your child in finding practical solutions to problems
- Tackle hard tasks in small steps
- Be consistent but not unrealistic
- Dyslexic children often need to be taught things that other children pick up without specific adult help. e.g. how to tidy a drawer,
- Try to maintain a sense of humour!



## Helping with homework

- Try to find a regular time and create routine
- Helpful if child can work away from distractions but be near enough to ask for help when needed
- Agree a sensible time limit with the child's teacher
- Set a timer. Several short bursts could be more effective for learning than one long session
- Help by reading instructions and long passages when needed
- It is useful for your child to have a friend who won't mind being phoned to check on homework



## Helping with Reading

- Try to keep sessions short, light and happy
- Start with short sessions and build up gradually
- Be prepared to stop reading if a book is boring and change to another
- Explore a wide range of books and authors
- Even teenagers who can read sometimes need a helping "voice"
- Find ways to keep the place on the page
- Re-read favourite stories
- Use story tapes as well as books



## Helping with spelling

### Syllables

- This may help with regular words. Say the word aloud, count the number of syllables. Work on each syllable in turn e.g. Lem/on

### Little words in big words

- The word **that** has the word **hat** in it
- There is a **rat** in the word **separate**

### Family groups / Rhyming Chunks

- Choose a word that is known for lesser known ones. E.g. If your child can spell like then bike, strike etc can also be spelt

### Mnemonics

- Using silly sentences to learn tricky words
- Fascinate – **fred** and **sam** came **in** and **ate**

### Look, say, cover, write, check

- The pupil **looks** at the word, **says** the letters aloud, **covers** the word, **writes** the word whilst saying the letters aloud, then finally **checks** the word

### Pronouncing for spelling

- e.g. wed/nes/day s/chool

## Reading Rulers

- The ruler is a text highlighter about 150mm in length. It will fit easily into a pocket or pencil case, or can be kept in the pages of a book as a bookmark
- It is made of a combination of opaque and transparent plastic that both underlines the text and highlights it



## Dyslexic Handwriting

- Right from the beginning introduce the pupil to the cursive style of writing
- Aim to help pupils produce a legible style of writing for communication and speed
- Very often pupils can write well when they can take their time, but when speed is a factor it can quickly become difficult to maintain legibility

## Grip

- The most commonly used is the tripod grip
- For most people it is probably the most efficient
- Gives good control
- Least liable to cause pain when writing for a long time
- The non writing hand should support the paper – not the head!!



## Fonts for people with Dyslexia

This font is designed to make documents easier to read for people with dyslexia.

There are several fonts specially developed for people with dyslexia. They are designed to increase readability of documents for people with dyslexia. Once installed you can use it in documents.

**OpenDyslexic** - open sourced font. It is free to download – just visit their website at: [opendyslexic.org/](http://opendyslexic.org/)

**Dyslexie** - is free to download for home use from their website: [www.dyslexiefont.com](http://www.dyslexiefont.com)

## Useful Contacts

### British Dyslexia Association (BDA)



The BDA is the voice of Dyslexic people and they aim to influence government and other institutions to promote a dyslexic friendly society enabling all dyslexic people to reach their potential.

National Helpline: 0333 405 4567

Web: [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

### Dyslexia North East

This is a group of dedicated volunteers who want to improve the educational opportunities and support for those with dyslexia and related conditions such as ADHD, Dyspraxia and ASD.



Web: [www.dyslexianortheast.org](http://www.dyslexianortheast.org)

Email: [info@dyslexianortheastengland.org.uk](mailto:info@dyslexianortheastengland.org.uk)

Tel: 0191 258 8437 / 0786 826 3696

### Dyslexia Action

The charity has now closed and no longer does assessments Their website still provides some useful resources.

Web: [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)



## Newcastle Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service

This service provides information specialising in education matters and includes information and signposting on social care and health issues.



Judith Lane  
Tel: 0191 284 0480

## Contact

contact

(New name for Contact a Family)  
Helping families in the North East who care for disabled children.

Tel: 0191 213 6300

Email: [northeast.office@contact.org.uk](mailto:northeast.office@contact.org.uk)

Web: [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

Look for advice in your area - select North East

## Skills for People

This booklet is produced by the Skills for People, a charity run by disabled people. We are based in Newcastle upon Tyne and for over 25 years we have been helping disabled people to speak up for themselves and make their own choices about their lives. Our work is led by disabled people and their experiences are at the heart of all we do.

Our Family Advice Workers support families with disabled children/young people up to the age of 25. They help families by giving practical advice, appropriate to their needs and working across all agencies such as education, social care, health, benefits, leisure and voluntary services. Their services are free to parents/carers.

We produce a range of information booklets, factsheets and "How To" guides. Visit our website to see the full range: [www.nsn.org.uk/resources](http://www.nsn.org.uk/resources)

## How to get in touch

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Twitter: [@skillsforpeople](https://twitter.com/skillsforpeople)



Facebook: [on.fb.me/1istYKg](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/1istYKg)



Newcastle parents of children with disabilities  
and special needs working together

Facebook: [Pass it on Parents Newcastle](https://www.facebook.com/PassitOnParentsNewcastle)

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