

Dyslexia

Information for parents of primary age children

A Wales Learning Community Guide

Dyslexia

This leaflet aims to give parents of primary age children basic information on dyslexia.

Dyslexia belongs to a family called Specific Learning Difficulties.

What do we mean by a **Specific Learning Difficulty**?

We would use the term "specific learning difficulty" when a child is having problems coping with a *specific* area or areas of their work at school and does not have general difficulties throughout the curriculum.

Personally, I don't like to use the word "difficulty" as this gives the impression there is something wrong or bad. I prefer to use the word "difference", but you will more often see the term "specific learning difficulty" used.

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty in its own right.

Other specific learning difficulties include:

- dyscalculia (maths),
- dyspraxia (movement and coordination),
- dysgraphia (writing).

Dyslexia is suspected where a child is having difficulty with aspects of reading or writing when there's a *clear difference* between these and the way they perform in other areas of school work.

Dyslexia is different for every child.

Dyslexia is on a **spectrum**. This means some children display very mild differences, whilst others severely struggle on a daily basis.

Your child could be displaying relatively mild problems with spelling and written work.

At the other end of the spectrum your child could be having real difficulties with learning to read, despite the efforts of teachers and parents.

And there are all sorts of variations in between.

Children with dyslexia think and learn differently – it should not be seen as being a bad thing. If you search for “famous dyslexics” you may be surprised what you find!!

Dyslexia is much more than a “label” – children with dyslexia should *never* be labelled or told that they have something wrong with them or even worse, that they are stupid. In fact, it is the opposite. Dyslexia should be seen as an individual way of learning and should be seen as a positive.

One fact is clear: no two pupils with dyslexia are the same.

How to assess dyslexia

Dyslexic difficulties cannot usually be assessed properly, or recognised clearly, until at least the age of seven or eight, when gaps between expectation and performance can be seen. However, signs may well have been evident at a much earlier age.

There will normally be strategies already in place to help deal with any problems that teachers and teaching assistants have identified.

An assessment may be carried out to establish the nature and severity of the problems your child is facing, or this may not happen until they arrive at secondary school.

The way forward may be for a programme of additional help and support to be designed and put in place for your child as part of their normal classroom work.

Sometimes pupils are withdrawn from the class for short periods of time to allow them to work with a teacher or teaching assistant on their own. This decision is down to individual schools.

Occasionally, your child may need a more thorough support programme and assessment – but the school will involve you at every step of the way.

If you are unsure – ask your child’s school for advice.

What does dyslexia look like?

- ★ Swapping letters over when reading. Like saying **was** instead of **saw**, mixing up **b** and **d**, **p** and **q**.
- ★ Writing letters the wrong way round.
- ★ Finding it really hard to write by hand.
- ★ Finding it hard to copy things off the board
- ★ Not understanding what they just read.
- ★ Not remembering or understanding what they have just heard.
- ★ Can't repeat what they have just been told.
- ★ Not good at writing down what they think.
- ★ Understanding and following instructions is really hard.
- ★ Mixing up left and right.
- ★ Getting letters the wrong way round.



If your child is showing some of these differences please remember – **IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT** – you should not feel bad as a parent. Many people see having dyslexia as a gift – something to be proud of – it means your child is able to think about things in a different way. Many dyslexics have strengths in other areas – for example: art, music, acting, sport, business or creativity.

There is no magic cure for dyslexia – but help and support can be put in place to make sure your child does their very best.

Everyone has to work really hard to be successful. Dyslexics have to work even harder and may get tired more easily... be patient !

Your child will have to work really hard at listening and have to practice things much more than others

- Listening to what people say.
- Listening to instructions.
- Listening to themselves reading out loud or inside their heads.
- Listening and making sure that they are getting the right sounds and the right messages.
- Practising spelling and practising writing.



All this means extra work for your child.



Talk with your family, friends and teachers so that you still have some fun too !

What you can do to help as a parent.

First of all, be positive.

Concentrate on what your child is good at.

Don't get hung up on the problem areas.

Remember that your child will be only too aware of the problems they're facing at school.

You can help enormously by giving as much support and encouragement at home.



You can do that by

- working closely with your son or daughter's school to find the best way forward
- reading to your child regularly, or getting someone else to read to them
- use taped books so that your son or daughter can enjoy them without having to read every word
- making learning as much fun as you can
- using rhymes and lists of letters that make up amusing names to teach spelling - the more amusing and funnier, the better!
- making learning as active as possible by encouraging your child to use all of his or her senses
- encouraging your child to make full use of a computer - it's fun and very useful
- praising your child whenever you can





Want more information ?

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

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