

**SECTION 1**

**DYSLEXIA:  
How Parents  
Can Help**

**Ideas and Suggestions to help you support your child  
with Dyslexia at home**



# PARENTS' PACK

Parents can make a real difference in helping their dyslexic child to make progress with reading and spelling.

This pack contains ideas and suggestions for you to use at home.

These have been especially selected to support your children with dyslexia

'Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers. They play a crucial role in helping their child learn. We want to encourage more effective involvement of family learning in early years and primary education.'

*Excellence in Schools*

## THE DYSLEXIC CHILD - HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

### 1. Be POSITIVE

- Acknowledge and praise strengths - build on these to keep child motivated - boost confidence and self esteem
- Never compare to brothers and sisters
- Encourage leisure activities
- Praise even minor improvements - and not just reading and spelling, e.g. being able to lay a table correctly
- "I'm dyslexic - I can't do it"  
"Yes, you're dyslexic and it will take you longer but you can do it".



### 2. Be PATIENT

- With child - allow plenty of time; allow them to help themselves
- With teachers and school - talk and work together; progress may be slow but it needs to be at a rate a child can cope with



### 3. Be AWARE

- Look for symptoms and signs of difficulty - stress/frustration/tiredness

- Avoid failure situations at home - try to prevent your child from feeling inadequate; try to avoid asking questions with a younger child present who may know the answer.
- Recognise areas in which they may fail and help them to avoid them - don't turn them into problems
- Keep them motivated - praise any spellings which are nearly correct and praise them for making an attempt at reading. Help with the tricky bits.

#### 4. THINGS TO DO WHEN READING

- Read to your child - let them choose the book
- Take turns reading a few sentences or a paragraph
- Don't make them read to you - only if they want to
- Which book? Do the 5 finger trick - tell your child to put a finger up on every word on the page they think they may need help with. If more than one hand is needed, the book is too difficult
- How long? Only read for short periods. 5 - 10 minutes
- Making sense of an unknown word

Give thinking time

Praise a "nearly" right try

Blend the first 1 or 2 sounds in the word

Look at the picture for clues

Read to the end of the sentences and go back if it doesn't make sense

Identify any other sounds in the word - give help with "tricky" sounds

Tell them the word if they still can not read it - do not make a fuss - just carry on with the book

- Recap on the story now and again to make sure they have not lost the plot of the story



## 5. THINGS TO DO FOR WRITING AND SPELLING

- Create reasons for writing:
  - Shopping lists
  - "My room - PRIVATE"
  - Birthday cards
  - Invitations
  - Thank you notes
  - Messages on post it notes
- Type up into "best" for them
- Help them to learn spellings for tests - use silly sentences like:
  - Said - Sam's apple is delicious
  - People - people eat oranges people like eggs
- Create a Spelling Dictionary
- Use the computer
- Helping with spelling of individual words

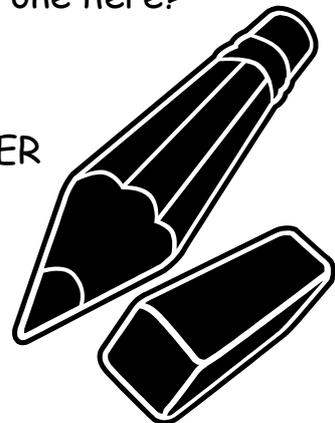
How many sounds can you hear? - draw dashes on scraps of paper

Write the first sound here? And the next one here?

Etc

Help with writing of unknown sounds

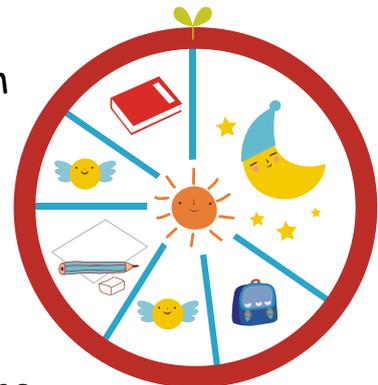
**SAY THE SOUNDS AND NOT THE LETTER NAMES**



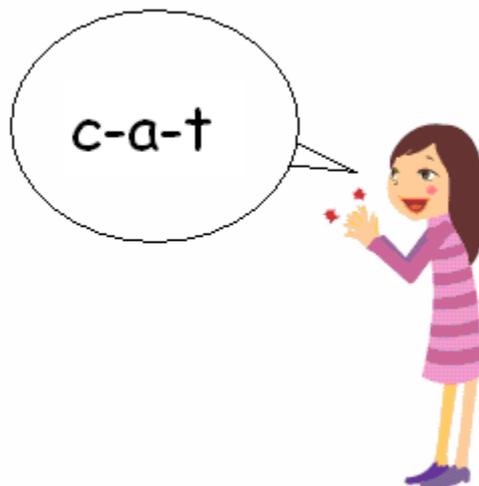
## 6. OTHER WAYS TO HELP



- Watch and talk about TV
- Play board and card games
- Play alphabet games - say the sound NOT the letter name
  - I-spy
  - Ten things/names beginning with given sound
  - Same letter pairs: angry ant, busy bee, cute car
- Teach independence - shoe laces, buttons, left from right, doing jobs etc.
- Let them put into words what they are doing
- Be positive about homework and help them to enjoy it
- Help them to get organised - make a timetable - e.g. Monday PE Kit Allow the child to take responsibility for remembering and getting the things for the day.
- "Right order" games/activities
  - Days of the week and months of the year
  - The day with times: "At 7 'o' clock we get up. I had breakfast at 7.30..." etc
  - Telling the time
  - Memory lists: "I'm going on holiday and I'm going to take..." List items.
  - Order the family, e.g. by: height/age/alphabetical order



- Doing things in order e.g. taking a bath/making a cup of tea, etc.
  - Placing in order by looking - cut up comics, muddle order and ask to put together again/order holiday pictures
- Sounds around
- Clapping and rhyming games
  - Nursery rhymes, silly poems, songs
  - Words that rhyme with names and objects



## BOOKS FOR PARENTS



"This book doesn't make sens, cens, sns, scen, sense" - J. Auger  
(Whurr Publishers Ltd)

*"a really good read and tremendously heartening to know that someone else has been in the same boat. The author's three sons and their different problems and responses are really interesting. It provides helpful ideas for all parents. It is a book that could easily be given to other family member who may not understand the effects of dyslexia"*  
(Dyslexia Review)

"Dyslexia: A Parents' Survival Guide" - C. Ostler (Ammonite Books)

*"An extremely practical book which offers not only useful advice but is a very realistic and humorous account of personal experiences of raising two children, one of whom is dyslexic"*  
(Dyslexia Review)

"The Reality of Dyslexia" - J. Osmond (Channel 4/Cassell)

*"A can't put it down book. It touches every nerve a parent of a dyslexic feels. I've been there, got the T-shirt and it is relieving to know that others have too"*  
(Dyslexia Review)

"The secret life of the Dyslexic Child" - R. Frank (Rodde)

*"...enables parents to take a walk in the child's shoes."*

## Make Learning Family Fun Time!!



Many valuable skills can be developed through playing games. It is a time when all the family can join together. The element of chance in many games helps the child who struggles at school. This is because there is the chance that they might win.

Don't rig the results of a game: It won't help in the long run.

- Make it a relaxed time, so don't start a game unless you have got time. You can always set a time limit for those games that drag on and on.
- Sometimes it is fun to make your own!
- Some of the commercial games you might try are:
  - Battleships
  - Boggle
  - Chess
  - Connect 4
  - Downfall
  - Draughts
  - Guess Who
  - Happy Families
  - Ludo
  - Monopoly
  - Pairs
  - Patience
  - Scrabble
  - Snakes and Ladders
  - Snap
  - Trivial Pursuit
  - Word Bingo



Through playing these games you are developing such skills as; logical thinking, memory, spelling and vocabulary skills, communication, counting, addition and subtraction and social skills such as turn taking and the idea of fairness.

### Things to do at home

#### Why play games?

From the earliest days of childhood children love to play games. A great deal of learning takes place when children are playing games because they are in a play situation and not under any pressure. The child is often unaware of the learning taking place because of their enthusiasm for the game.

Games can provide an effective method of learning by:

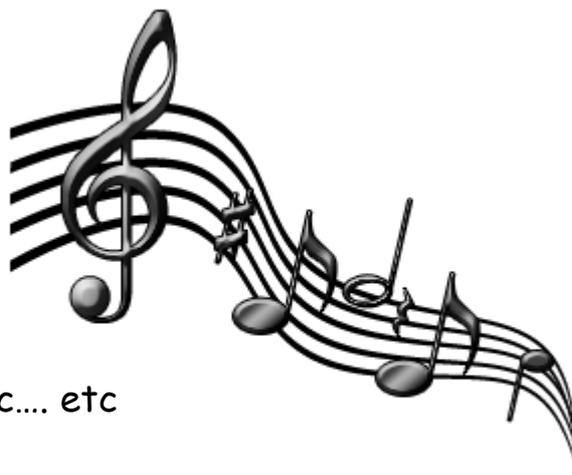
- Reinforcing
- Practising
- Improving

Games should:

- Test what the child needs to practice
- Not test too many ideas or skills
- Be fair, balancing skill and luck between players
- Be interesting
- Be short (under 10 minutes)
- Have lots to physically do
- Have clear rules (with potential for variants)
- BE FUN!

## Alphabet Games

Learn to sing the alphabet  
Teach child to sing to a tune,  
that does not run l,m,n together.



Find ten things beginning with a, b, c.... etc



Play find a boys name, girls name, food, football team etc beginning with 'a' 'b' and so on. Make up your own list of things to find, up to five different categories.

Alliteration games. Make up "silly" lists, have an angry ant, bossy bee, cold cabbage etc.

You don't always have to start at 'a' with any of the games, but try to play in alphabetical order. Try to slip the games in at odd times during the day. A short fun session is more effective than something that becomes a chore for all of your.

## Activities

For pencil control, I would suggest tracing and accurate colouring in. Start with fairly plain things and gradually get more intricate.

### **Handwriting patterns**

Use handwriting patterns to make decorative borders to letters or cards. Handwriting books are available from W.H.Smith.

### **Cutting out shapes**

Draw straight lines, wavy lines, circles, square and triangles to be cut along or around. Make sure that the paper or card is cut accurately

### **Make your own alphabet book**

Draw around then cut out pictures from catalogues and stick them on a page. Write the letter in upper and lower case and the name of the object on the page

### **Jigsaw puzzles**

#### Sequencing games

These are helpful for improving memory and spelling skills

Teach the days of the week and months of the year

#### Sequence the days with times

At 7o'clock, I get up. At half past seven I have breakfast etc. This could be made into a book or just done verbally.

Teach how to tell the time. Use an analogue clock with all twelve numbers, not Roman numerals.

A listing game can help build short term memory skills

**Example** - This is a game that needs two or more players.

The first player says "I am going on my holidays and in my suitcase I will pack... a swimsuit"

The next player then says "I am going on holiday and in my suitcase I will pack a swimsuit and a towel".

Then each player adds an item to the list.

If a player cannot remember the items on the list, they are out of the game

### Sequence the family

Put names into alphabetical order. Put everyone in age order. Put everyone in order of their height. Put people in order of how close they live to you

### Cooking Sequences

Ask how you should make a sandwich, a drink, a burger, etc. Check that all stages have been included. This could also be made into a book.

Make a simple recipe together. Ask for the recipe and methods used to be retold while it is cooking. Repeat this when you are eating the results! Microwave sponge is an easy quick recipe to start with. You could make your own recipe book.

### Comics

Cut up old "Beano" stories into individual pictures, muddle them up and ask for them to be put back into sequence.

Make up your own stories using pictures from comics. Put the pictures in order to tell the story.

### Rhymes

An awareness of rhymes in words is important for recognising letter patterns in spelling.

Play clapping and rhyming games.

Teach nursery and rhyming games.

Teach nursery rhymes or short poems

Try to find words that rhyme with words, names or objects that come into conversations.

### Reading

An easy way to see if a book is at a suitable level for your child is to ask them to put a finger on every word they have to have help with on the page. If they have to use more than one hand the book is too hard.

The local library should be able to advise you on suitable books for your child's reading age.

### Reading for Parents

**The Gift of Dyslexia** - By Ronald D. Davis, published by Souvenir Press, ISBN 0-285-63412-7

**A Parent's Survival Guide** - By C. Ostler. This book is out of print. You should be able to borrow it from the local library; if they do not have it they should be able to order it for you. This is a helpful book to read. It gives the parents view of having a dyslexic child from a practical point of view rather than focussing on literacy skills.

## Colour

- Add visual dimensions to activities, such as:

Coloured chalk  
Paint  
Thick felt tip pens  
Write large shapes and letters



These methods will act as a "hook" in the brain on which other information can hang

- Encourage the child to use fluorescent pens to highlight the difficult part of words. This will enhance the child's learning experience of the word. The shape and the colours of the highlight will help the child to remember
- Use coloured paper instead of white. Many children prefer cream. Some children find this easier to look at. Black print on white paper can sometimes cause visual distortion.
- Green is a very powerful colour - try using green felt tip pens or highlighting in green



## Useful Resources

**Grasping the Nettle** by Dr Kate Saunders published and available through PATOSS (Teachers and Parents).

**Dyslexia: A parents' guide to dyslexia, dyspraxia and other learning difficulties** by Valerie Muter and Helen Likierman, published by Vermilion (ISBN 978-0091923389).

**Dyslexia: A Complete Guide for Parents** by Gavin Reid, published by Wiley, (ISBN 0-470-86312-9).

**Dyslexia: A Parent's Survival Guide**, by Christine Ostler, published by Ammonite Books, (ISBN 9781903842072).

**Firm Foundations: A Parent's Guide to the Skills Essential for Reading and Writing**, by Clare Welsh and Lynn Fallaize, published by Barrington Stoke (ISBN: 9781842993002).

**Seven Ways to Help your Child with Reading** by Barbara Geere (ISBN 0-9512271-0-6).

**Seven Ways to Help your Child with Maths** by Barbara Geere (ISBN 0-9512271-1-4).

**Take Time: Movement Exercises for Parents, Teachers and Therapists of Children with Difficulties in Speaking, Reading, Writing and Spelling** by Mary Nash-Wortham and Jean Hunt, published by Robinswood Press, (ISBN 9781869981587).

**101 Ways to Get your Child to Read (Quick Read)** by Patience Thomson, published by Barrington Stoke (ISBN 1842996711).

**Dyslexia: A Teenager's Guide**, by Sylvia Moody published by Random House (ISBN: 9780091900014).

### **Explaining Dyslexia to Young Children**

**Brian Has Dyslexia** (Suitable 5 yrs +) by Jenny Leigh, published by Healthy Books (ISBN 9781902463544).

**Dyslexia: Talking it Through** (Suitable for 8-11 yrs) by Althea Braithwaite, published by Happy Cat Books (ISBN 1903285550).

**My name is Brian Brain** by Jenny Betancourt, published by Scholastic Paperbacks (US) (ISBN 0590449222).

**Sound Out Books and Ann Arbor tracking programmes**, published by Ann Arbor Publishers Ltd. Suitable for 8-13 years. [www.annarbor.co.uk](http://www.annarbor.co.uk)

**Barrington Stoke Series**. Chapter books for reading age below 8, with interest level 8-13.

**Reading reflex** by Carmen and Geoffrey McGuines. ISBN 0-14-028038-3

**Alpha to Omega** by Bev Hornsby. [www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

**Toe by Toe** by K.Cowling and H.Cowling. ISBN 0-9522564-0-1. [email-sales@toe-by-toe.co.uk](mailto:sales@toe-by-toe.co.uk) [www.toe-by-toe.co.uk](http://www.toe-by-toe.co.uk)

**Write from the Start** by Teirdirescy and Addy. Tel: 01945 463 441

**Limericks, Laughs and Vowel Digraphs** by Bob Hext-Fremlin. Published by Crossbow Educational.

**Dyslexia Stile**. [www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

**The Ace Spelling Dictionary** by D.Moseley. [www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

**Franklin Elementary Spellmaster** (linked to Oxford children's Dictionary). Published by Franklin Electronic Publishers (Europe) Ltd.

**Oxford Spell it Yourself** by G T Hawker. Published by Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-970342-9

**Helping Children with Reading and Spelling - A Special Needs Manual** by Rea Reason and Rene Boote. Published by Routledge. ISBN 0-415-1107334

**So You Think You've Got Problems** by Rosalind Birkett. Published by Egon Publishers. ISBN 0-905858-85-0.

**The Left-handers Book** by Diane G. Paul. ISBN 1-869981-59-6.  
[www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

**Swap and Fix Cards**. Published by Gamz.

**Paper Chains Phonics**. [www.LDAlearning.com](http://www.LDAlearning.com)

## Computer Software

### **Wordshark 4**

Whitespace Ltd  
41 Mall Road, London, W6 9DG  
Tel: 020 8748 5926

### **Speaking Starspell**

Tel: 01475 819 799

### **Clicker 4**

### **Talking textease**

Reads back exactly what has been typed in after each word  
REM Included in some of the "Window Box" programmes

### **Scanit**

Reading Improvement Software  
Maia Learning Systems  
Tel: 01626 200 121

### **Typing Instructor Deluxe**

Tel: 01252 792 400

### **Type to Learn**

Tel: 01474 357 350

## An A-Z of Celebrities with Dyslexia

### **A**

Kirsty Alsopp - TV presenter

Muhammad Ali - Former Boxer

Fred Astaire - Actor

### **B**

Louis Barnett- Chocolatier and Entrepreneur

Marlon Brando - Actor

Richard Branson - Entrepreneur

Alexander Graham Bell - Inventor

Darcey Bussell - Ballet dancer

### **C**

Cher - Singer

Agatha Christie - Writer

Brian Conley - Comedian and actor

Tom Cruise - Actor

### **D**

Roald Dahl - Author

Leonardo da Vinci - Artist

Patrick Dempsey - Actor

Walt Disney - Film producer

Duchess of York

## **E**

Thomas Edison - Inventor

Albert Einstein - Scientist

Ben Elton - Comedian

## **F**

Harrison Ford - Actor

Michael Faraday - Chemist and Physicist

Dustin Hoffman - Actor

## **G**

Noel Gallagher - Singer

Whoopi Goldberg - Actor

Bill Gates - Microsoft Chairman

Duncan Goodhew - Former Olympic Swimmer

Danny Glover - Actor

## **H**

Jerry Hall - Model

Lord Philip Harris - Entrepreneur and millionaire

Tommy Hilfiger - Designer

Anthony Hopkins - Actor

Bob Hoskins - Actor

## **I**

John Irving - Author

Eddie Izzard - Comedian

## **J**

Steve Jobs - Founder of Apple

Magic Johnson - Basketball player

## **K**

Felicity Kendall - Actor

Nigel Kennedy - Violinist

Jodie Kidd - Supermodel

Keira Knightley - Actor

## **L**

Jay Leno - TV presenter

Kenny Logan - Rugby Player

Lynda La Plante - TV writer

John Lennon - Musician

Carl Lewis - Olympian

## **K**

Ingvar Kamprad - Founder of Ikea

## **M**

Charles Rennie Mackintosh - Artist and designer

Lord McAlpine

Mika - Singer

Jo Malone - Retailer

Kim Marsh - Actor

James Martin - Chef

## O

Dominic O'Brien - Word memory champion

Jamie Oliver - Chef

Ozzy Osbourne - Rock star

## P

Theo Paphitis - Chairman/Chief Executive - Ryman and Partners

Marco Pierre-White - Chef

River Phoenix - Actor

Pablo Picasso - Artist

## R

Prince Harry

Princess Beatrice

Sir Steven Redgrave - Former Olympic rower

Auguste Rodin - Sculptor

Zara Reid - Businesswoman

Guy Ritchie - Director

Lord Richard Rogers - Architect

Lee Ryan - Singer

## S

Eric Shipton - Mountaineer and explorer

Sir Jackie Stewart - Racing driver

Steven Spielberg - Director

Sylvester Stallone - Actor

Rick Stein - Chef

Imogen Stubbs - Actor

Joss Stone - Singer

## **T**

Anthea Turner - TV presenter

Liv Tyler - Actor

Billy Bob Thornton - Actor

Brian Turner - Chef

## **V**

Kevin Viner - Chef

## **W**

Henry Winkler - Actor

Ruby Wax - TV presenter

Andy Warhol - Artist

Marco Pierre White - chef

Zoe Wannamaker - Actor

## **Y**

William Butler Yeats - Poet

## **Z**

Benjamin Zephaniah - Poet

## **Further Information (Support and Advisory Services)**

### **Dyslexia Action**

Tel: 01784 222 300

e-mail: [info@dyslexiaaction.org.uk](mailto:info@dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

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

### **British Dyslexia Association**

Tel: 0845 251 9002

Website: [www.bdadyslexia.co.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.co.uk)

### **The Dyslexia Association of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham**

Tel: 7000 50 50 55

e-mail: [info@dyslexiawise.co.uk](mailto:info@dyslexiawise.co.uk)

website : [www.dyslexiawise.co.uk](http://www.dyslexiawise.co.uk)

