

Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

Supporting your Child with Dyslexia or Literacy Difficulties.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that affects a person's ability to read, write, and spell. It is not related to intelligence but rather how the brain processes written and spoken language.

In 2023, the Delphi study brought together experts from around the world to agree on a new definition of dyslexia. The definition was finalised in February 2025. It describes dyslexia as a set of processing difficulties that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling. The most common difficulty is with phonological processing, but challenges with memory, processing speed, and recognising written words (orthographic skills) are also contributing factors. Follow this link for the [full definition](#).



Key Points from the Delphi Definition

1. Dyslexia leads to varying levels of difficulty learning to read and spell.
2. Most children with dyslexia struggle with phonological awareness (processing sounds), memory, processing speed, and orthographic skills (recognising written words).
3. Some children may also experience co-occurring difficulties, e.g. difficulties with attention, motor skills or numeracy.
4. Dyslexia can run in families.



Important!

Dyslexia or literacy difficulties can affect a child or young person's self-esteem. It is crucial to help your child understand their challenges and foster a positive sense of self. You may find some of this information helpful to share with your child.

- [See Dyslexia Differently](#)
- [Made By Dyslexia \(kids page\)](#)
- [Made By Dyslexia \(parent info\)](#)

Identifying and Diagnosing Dyslexia



- You don't need a full diagnosis for your child to receive extra support with reading and writing. Schools should use screening tools to understand pupils' learning profiles and put appropriate support in place.
- The SCIL Team supports schools in making suitable provision for pupils with a range of learning difficulties, including dyslexia. See [Our Graduated Approach to Support Pupils with SpLD \(Dyslexia\)](#) for more information. We've also created a [checklist to help identify literacy difficulties](#) with suggestions of support.
- If you decide to pursue a formal diagnosis, ensure the assessor holds an Assessment Practising Certificate or is a qualified Educational Psychologist. Lists of recognised assessors are available on the [SASC](#) and [BDA](#) websites.





- **Celebrate strengths and interests**

Build confidence by focusing on what your child enjoys and does well.

Example: If they love drawing, encourage them to illustrate stories or create comics.

- **Read together regularly**

Make reading a relaxed, enjoyable part of your routine. Take turns reading or let your child follow along as you read aloud.

Example: Read a chapter together each night and talk about the story or new words. Here is a [Guide to Paired Reading](#) you may find useful.

- **Use audiobooks and text-to-speech tools**

These help your child access books and learning materials without the pressure of decoding every word.

Example: Try Audible, BorrowBox, or Microsoft Immersive Reader for homework or leisure reading. (BorrowBox is a free app that allows you to borrow eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, and eNewspapers from your local public library using your library membership).

- **Use subtitles and closed captions**

Watching TV with subtitles can improve word recognition.

Example: Turn on subtitles when watching favourite shows or YouTube videos.

- **Encourage storytelling and verbal expression**

Let your child express their ideas out loud and encourage them to tell stories—this helps develop their communication skills and creativity.

Example: Ask them to tell you a story, then help them record or write it down. You can use tools like Dictate in Word, audio recording in PowerPoint or story maps to support this.

- **Encourage typing and assistive technology**

Typing can be easier than handwriting, and tools like predictive text or speech-to-text can support writing.

Example: Use Google Docs voice typing or MicroSoft Assistive Technology tools for homework.

- **Break tasks into smaller steps**

This reduces cognitive demands and helps your child stay focused.

Example: “First write the title, then answer question one. Let me know when you’re ready for the next step.”

- **Use visual aids and colour coding**

Visual supports help with memory and organisation.

Example: Use coloured pens for different subjects or create mind maps to plan writing.

- **Play word and memory games**

Games make learning fun and build language skills.

Example: Try Scrabble, Boggle, Wordle, Nessy, or simple games like “I Spy” using letters or sounds.

- **Use real-life opportunities to practise skills**

Everyday tasks can reinforce reading and writing.

Example: Ask your child to help write a shopping list, read a recipe, or follow instructions for a game.

- **Use multi-sensory learning techniques**

Engaging more than one sense helps with memory and understanding.

Example: Spell words using magnetic letters, sand trays, or finger tracing while saying the word aloud.

- **Create a calm, consistent routine**

Routines help children feel secure and reduce anxiety.

Example: Set a regular time and quiet space for homework, with short breaks built in.

- **Use calendars and planners**

Help your child stay organised and manage time.

Example: Use a visual calendar or planner to track homework and activities.

- **Support emotional wellbeing**

Reassure your child that everyone learns differently and that their strengths matter.

Example: Talk about their talents—like creativity, kindness, or problem-solving.

- **Model a positive attitude towards mistakes**

Show that mistakes are part of learning.

Example: Share your own mistakes and how you learned from them.

- **Stay connected with school**

Regular communication with teachers ensures consistent support.

Example: Share what's working at home and ask how to reinforce school strategies.



Please remember your child may be working extra hard at school. Therefore they may be tired or overwhelmed at the end of the school day. Please ensure they have time to rest and any extra activities you do at home are fun for them!

Useful organisations

- [British Dyslexia Association \(BDA\)](#)
- [Dyslexia UK](#)
- [Dyslexia Assist \(By Parents for Parents - By Children for Children\)](#)

References / Evidence base – informed by:

Carroll, J.M., Holden, C., Kirby, P., Thompson, P.A., Snowling, M.J. and the Dyslexia Delphi Panel (2025), Toward a consensus on dyslexia: findings from a Delphi study. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

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Hornigold, J., Help! My Child Has Dyslexia: A Practical Guide for Parents (2012), LDA