

**Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that can cause problems with reading, writing and spelling.**

Dyslexia is referred to in the SEND Code of Practice as a specific learning difficulty, Section 6.31 of the code notes that : “specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.”

Unlike a learning disability, intelligence isn't affected.

It's estimated up to 1 in every 10 people in the UK has some degree of dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a lifelong problem that can present challenges on a daily basis, but support is available to improve reading and writing skills and help those with the problem be successful at school and work.

**What are the signs of dyslexia?**

Signs of dyslexia usually become apparent when a child starts school and begins to focus more on learning how to read and write.

A person with dyslexia may:

- read and write very slowly
- confuse the order of letters in words.
- put letters the wrong way round (such as writing "b" instead of "d")
- have poor or inconsistent spelling
- understand information when told verbally, but have difficulty with information that's written down
- find it hard to carry out a sequence of directions
- struggle with planning and organisation
- have difficulty in short term or working memory

But people with dyslexia often have good skills in other areas, such as creative thinking and problem solving.

**What causes dyslexia?**

People with dyslexia find it difficult to recognise the different sounds that make up words and relate these to letters.

Dyslexia isn't related to a person's general level of intelligence. Children and adults of all intellectual abilities can be affected by dyslexia.

The exact cause of dyslexia is unknown, but it often appears to run in families.

It's thought certain genes inherited from your parents may act together in a way that affects how some parts of the brain develop during early life.

**Reading**

To help with reading efficiency / rate the timed reading of lists of regular and irregular words can work well.

To aid with difficulties reading non-words are a representation of new/unknown words. An appropriate supportive tool to help here would be the highly structured multisensory reading programme **Toe By Toe**. Approximately 5 minutes a day of this, a few days a week, could help. The teaching of non words is actually a very useful way of assessing phonic progress and decoding and encoding abilities. Regular daily reading practice, at an appropriate level, will be of great benefit.

Reading from a Kindle/e-Reader/tablet can also help. A huge range of books, magazines can be downloaded in digital format and the font can be adapted to a suitable size/style. They are also presented on a non-glare background making them more comfortable to read from. Audio books can also be downloaded.

A coloured overlay or coloured worksheets may benefit the reader. In addition it is possible to alter the background colours on computers and laptops. Lined pads and exercise books are also available in range of colours. If these are found to help, then further investigation into possible Visual Stress would be recommended.

**Spelling**

To help with spelling in a more multi-sensory way there is a technique known as Simultaneous Oral Spelling” . Spellings are learned by saying a word and sounding out the letter sounds or names (this helps phonemic awareness, following some speech sound and separating words into their constituent units). The word is written down, but each letter is said at the same time it is being written or traced and then it is read back. This enables the use of motor or kinaesthetic memory to help auditory memories as well as relating the feel and shape of the words to what they look like and what they sound like.



## Writing

For some having a structured format / writing frame to help break a writing task down may prevent an 'overload' scenario. A "Mind / Thought Map" may be useful for brainstorming ideas.

ICT can also be used to create writing frames / mind maps directly on screen, for example using the **Inspiration** software. This is a program to help plan, organise and structure writing using concept mapping. It is particularly useful for those who are visual, or non-word thinkers. The completed concept plan can then be transferred directly into a word document to act as a base to then be added to or edited.

Touch typing can also be very useful. The BBC **Dance Mat** program is a good resource for this and can be accessed online at [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing).

Once a proficiency in typing had been achieved the use of a laptop or computer should be encouraged for extended writing tasks both at home and school. The use of the spell, grammar check and read back facilities will ensure the writing is more accurate.

IPads and iPhones and similar devices are now increasingly being used and there is a number of Apps and tools that can address specific areas of need that dyslexics can encounter, such as Clicker.

## Phonological Processing

A weakness in phonological processing means that sequencing tasks may be difficult to carry out. For example processing incoming information, following instructions, planning and making decisions.

There may also be difficulties with concentration, distraction and maintaining focus, a feeling of "mental overload or switching off". It is also likely that there will be a heightened sensitivity to noise and stimuli and an impaired ability to screen out background noise or movement. There are strategy leaflets that are available but the main emphasis should be trying not to "overload" the individual with information and help to develop coping strategies.

## School setting

Teachers should convey high expectations about progress in reading and spelling to children and parents. If interventions that the school put in place and evaluated over time are not effective, the schools will consult specialist support teams, the specialist teaching and learning service (STLS) and staff from other schools to develop inclusive practices, at Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meetings for example.

## Useful websites

[www.canterburydyslexiacentre.co.uk/support/information](http://www.canterburydyslexiacentre.co.uk/support/information)

[www.wordshark.co.uk](http://www.wordshark.co.uk)

[www.smartkids.co.uk](http://www.smartkids.co.uk)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing)



Info taken from:

Kent Dyslexia Policy,  
Dyslexia help sites,  
staff and pupils.