

## ***What is Dyslexia?***

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language skills. It is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in reading and spelling.

Accompanying weaknesses may be short-term memory, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills.

It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects.

It has been suggested that up to 10% of the population (or even more) show some signs of dyslexia, particularly when it is present in other members of the family.

Individuals will experience difficulties throughout their lives, however the majority learn to develop strategies to enable them to cope.

Many achieve academically and go on to further and higher education.

## **Indicator of Dyslexia**

If your child has several of these indicators, further investigation should be made. Your child may be dyslexic, or there may be other reasons.  
*This is not a checklist.*

### **1. *Persisting factors.***

There are many persisting factors in dyslexia, which can appear from an early age. They will still be noticeable when the dyslexic child leaves school.

### **2. *Primary school age.***

- Has particular difficulty with reading and spelling.
- Puts letters and figures the wrong way round.
- Has difficulty remembering tables, alphabet, formulae etc.
- Leaves letters out of words or puts them in the wrong order.
- Occasionally confuses 'b' and 'd' and words such as 'no/on'.
- Has problems understanding what he/she has read.
- Takes longer than average to do written work.
- Has difficulty with tying shoe laces, tie, and dressing.
- Has difficulty telling left from right, order of days of the week etc.
- Has a poor sense of direction and still confuses left and right.
- Lacks confidence.
- A family history of dyslexia/reading difficulties.

### **3. *Aged 12 or over.***

As for primary schools, plus:

- Still reads inaccurately despite intervention and support.
- Still have difficulties in spelling despite intervention and support.
- Needs to have instructions and telephone numbers repeated.
- Confuses places, times, dates.
- Has difficulty with planning and writing essays.
- Has difficulty processing a long series of instructions at speed.

## Support for Your Child At Home

### **- Reading**

- Daily reading is essential.
- Lots and lots of practice is required for students with dyslexia to develop and master literacy skills.
- Read a book aloud to your child, while you point to the words.
- Read aloud with your child when they are becoming frustrated.  
*This helps them to understand and enjoy what they are reading and it still helps them to learn.*
- Listen to an audio book or audio-tape of the book, e.g. kindle, iPod while following the words.
- Read a story from a book slightly more difficult than the child can read themselves to help the child learn new vocabulary, generate ideas and be an enjoyable experience for both.
- Choose Dyslexia Friendly Books

### **- Handwriting**

- It is recommended that children learn the continuous cursive style.  
*By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape.*
- Practice letter and word flow from left to right; children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q);
- It is a good idea to use cream paper with well-spaced lines.
- It is best to use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened. They might use a chunky triangular pencil to aid the grip. As they get more confident, they can move on to a fountain pen or a special handwriting pen. You should avoid using ballpoint pens for handwriting exercises.
- Teaching touch typing skills and using a computer for written work can allow more concentration to be focused on the content of the piece.

## Homework Tips.

- Setting smaller amounts of work and/or allowing extra time with lots of short breaks will often help.
- A written or visual plan put in a prominent place is ideal. It should include a particular place set aside for homework. The homework place needs to be as quiet as possible.
- Work out the best time for your child to do their homework. Keep in mind that your child may be very tired after school - they have had to work harder than their peers because of their dyslexia.
- Divide homework tasks into manageable chunks. Give breaks between tasks.
- Help your child to generate ideas for writing tasks and projects before they start work. Revise vocabulary that they may need.
- Encourage them to present work using their personal strengths - for example, they could use pictures if they are good at art.
- Help your child to learn self-checking skills so they can go over their own work more independently. *For example, a simple process like COPS can be helpful when proof reading work: C = Capitals. O = overall appearance. P = punctuation. S = spelling.*
- Encourage your child to keep their school notes and work together in folders so they don't get lost or damaged.
- Organise notes into subjects, and ensure that they are filed regularly. Colour coding of subjects can greatly assist organisation and planning.
- Check that your child is bringing correct books and equipment to school each day.
- Build up resilience and independent work skills in your child. *For example, get your child to think about several different ways they could complete the task correctly before asking for help.*
- Revise work with your child before examinations. Encourage them to make notes, such as on coloured cards, underline or highlight key words in colour, draw pictures, etc. when studying to aid their memory.

## **How We Support Your Child**

At The City of Leicester College, we are dedicated to providing suitable help and support to our pupils, including those with Dyslexia.

All pupils experiencing literacy difficulties are assessed for Specific Learning Difficulties. Often, pupils will have further intervention to enhance their skills and development. If these difficulties are persistent, we then seek advice from external agencies; such as The Local Authority Special Needs Teaching Service and Educational Psychologists.

We have trained professionals in school who can assess pupils for Dyslexic tendencies. If necessary, we then refer students for a full diagnostic assessment of needs.

All of our teachers receive regular training and advice on supporting pupils with Dyslexia and we are currently working towards becoming a Dyslexic Friendly School.

## **Further Support and Guidance**

1. Speak to the Head of Year, Form Tutor, or Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at your child's school.
2. Contact your local Dyslexia Association.  
<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
3. You could request that an educational psychologist at the Local Education Authority (LEA) does a formal assessment.
4. Contact the Parent Partnership Scheme -  
<http://www.valonline.org.uk/parent-partnership-service>
5. Private Assessment by a suitably qualified Specialist Dyslexia Teacher Assessor. <http://www.bps.org.uk/>

*Please see The City of Leicester Website for further information on webpage links for literacy, books and games.*