

Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)



Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)



Hampshire
County Council



What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is often referred to as a specific learning difficulty to show that it is not an all-round learning problem. Dyslexia is a difficulty with words, but can involve more than just reading and spelling and can affect writing and number work.

It can also involve:

- an organising difficulty - for example, a younger child putting clothes on in the wrong order or back to front, or a secondary school pupil not remembering which books are needed for which lesson
- a word finding difficulty - for example, being unable to supply a word which is known and understood
- a memory difficulty - which could be poor short-term memory, a poor auditory memory (remembering things you hear), or sometimes a poor visual memory (remembering things you look at)
- a difficulty noticing how spoken words are broken up into syllables and individual sounds, and in hearing rhyme
- being poorly co-ordinated which could make a child appear clumsy.

Who does it affect?

Up to 10% of the population may have some degree of specific learning difficulty. In most cases this is likely to be fairly mild and can be managed within the classroom. In some cases, additional help will be needed from the school's special educational needs co-ordinator.

More boys than girls tend to have specific learning difficulties and some dyslexic children have a parent with dyslexia.

How can I tell if my child is dyslexic?

Before your child started school you may have noticed one or more of the following early indicators of dyslexia. Your child may have had difficulty with:

- learning to talk or pronouncing long words
- learning nursery rhymes
- dressing, especially when using buttons, zips and shoe laces
- colouring neatly and using scissors.

Once your child starts school you may notice that he or she:

- reverses the order of letters, numbers and words
- has a long-term difficulty remembering sequences, for example the alphabet, days of the week and months of the year
- has problems with time, both in telling the time and knowing which part of the day it is
- finds it difficult to concentrate, remember messages or to follow instructions
- has trouble putting names to things or people
- is late in learning to read and spell.

Remember – all children have to learn to do these things. If your child experiences one or two of these difficulties it does not mean that your child is dyslexic but noticing them does make you more alert to possible problems.



Is there a cure?

Dyslexia is not an illness, but a feature of the way some people learn. Many people with dyslexia have significant strengths in other areas. Your child will not grow out of being dyslexic. However, given the right support, he or she can learn to cope with and find ways of managing the difficulties. For example using lists, timetables and diaries can help.

Early recognition is important, so that support can be arranged to help your child make progress.

What should I do if I think my child is dyslexic?

If you are concerned that your child may be dyslexic, you should first discuss your worries with the headteacher or your child's class teacher. The special educational needs co-ordinator in the school may also be involved. He or she will know about dyslexia and the type of help your child might need. The school may consult an educational psychologist or a special educational needs adviser to help staff provide the right support.

You may also wish to contact the Hampshire Dyslexia Association who will be able to offer advice and tell you about local support groups (see end of leaflet).

What will the school do to help?

An individual education plan (IEP) may be written to record the steps needed to help your child and to monitor and record the progress he or she makes. The plan might include specially designed programmes for reading and spelling. Extra help may also be given to your child either in the classroom, in a small teaching group or individually. Any education plan developed for your child will be discussed with you on a regular basis.

What about subjects that require a lot of reading or writing?

If there are significant difficulties, your child may be encouraged to record his or her work in ways other than handwriting, for example:

- using a word processor with speech feedback
- writing in note form with labelled diagrams
- using a scribe.

If your child cannot read the text, it may be possible to have a recorded version, or an assistant in the classroom may be available to help with reading.

Will dyslexia only affect my child at school?

Children with dyslexia may lose confidence in themselves which can lead to unhappiness at school or a lack of motivation. Children may try hard at school and then vent their frustrations at home. If this is the case, it is especially important that you and the school are in close contact.

How can I help?

Remember that your child is likely to be tired when he or she gets home from school and will need time to relax. Children can be helped by their parents by:

- being read to as often as possible with the child looking at the words
- playing memory games
- being helped to organise themselves, for example by using lists
- not being compared with brothers, sisters or friends but finding things which they can do well and providing plenty of praise and reassurance.

For more information

SEN Service

Children's Services Department

Hampshire County Council

Elizabeth II Court East

The Castle

Winchester

SO23 8UG

Tel: 0845 603 5620

e-mail: childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

Website: www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-home

Parent Partnership Service

Children's Services Department

Hampshire County Council

Elizabeth II Court East

The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UG

Telephone: 01962 845870 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Answerphone available for out of hours or if we are unable to take your call

Email: enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk

Website: www3.hants.gov.uk/pps

Hampshire Connexions

For your local Connexions office please visit

www.hampshireconnexions.co.uk

Voluntary organisations

The British Dyslexia Association

Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches

Old Bracknell Lane

Bracknell RG12 7BW

Website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 251 9002

Office: 0845 251 9003

Fax: 0845 251 9005


Hampshire Dyslexia Association

The Orchard, White Hart Lane

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This booklet has been produced using Sassoon Primary typeface which was designed to be more easily read by children with dyslexia or reading difficulties.

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