

Helpline Number:

01785 356921



Staffordshire
S.E.N.I.D
Family Partnership



Information
Advice & Support
Service

Dyslexia - A guide for parents

Description

Most children learn to read and write easily. Others take longer and may need extra help, but do manage it. However, a few children find the process of learning to read, write and spell particularly hard.

Such children may have underlying problems that affect their ability to learn these skills. This is called "dyslexia", which means "difficulty with words". It is sometimes referred to, particularly by professionals, as a "specific learning difficulty" or "SpLD".

The Rose report in 2009 gave this description of dyslexia which has been adopted by the British Dyslexia Association:

"Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling."

Dyslexic tendencies occur in people of all backgrounds and of all abilities. It is estimated that about 10% of the population may be affected, with 4% of these having severe difficulties.

If you feel that your child's difficulties with reading, writing and spelling are affecting their progress at school, this may be the time to talk to your child's teacher and discuss your concerns.

Signs

Dyslexia creates difficulties with the ability to deal with text, and sometimes numbers too. Children may find it difficult to sort out the individual sounds that make up words. This will mean that they have problems with reading, writing and spelling.

Children may also have difficulty with memory and sequencing, numeracy and sometimes in other areas too. Some dyslexic children are described as being disorganized and forgetful – they never seem to have the right books and equipment for school. Dyslexia is sometimes seen alongside other conditions such as dyspraxia, so others may have difficulty with motor skills – that is, how they move their body or use equipment such as pens or scissors.

However, dyslexia is not all about difficulties. Children may be good at problem-solving, many are artistic or sporty. Every child has things they like and are good at. It helps to discover and celebrate these strengths and work with the school to develop them. It is important to keep a child's self esteem high.

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

If you are worried about your child's progress then always speak to your child's school. You may wish to make an appointment to see the class teacher or the school SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator). They may be able to reassure you that adequate progress is being made, or they may share your concerns.

If you feel you would like support to talk to the school staff, you can always take along a friend or talk to someone from SEND Family Partnership to help you prepare for your meeting.

Teachers in school will have experience of supporting children with reading and writing difficulties. Many will have received some training on dyslexia and some may have additional qualifications in teaching pupils who are dyslexic. They can help think about what changes may be needed in the classroom to make it easier for these children to learn.

What can the school do to support my child?

Teachers regularly assess a child's progress to help them plan new work. If they are concerned about a child's progress the teacher will look at how they can adapt their teaching to help the child learn. High quality teaching targeted at a child's area of weakness is the first response if a child is identified as making less than expected progress for their age. This may include making small changes to the way the lesson is taught, the materials that are used, or the support given to a child during normal teaching. These are reasonable adjustments to increase a child's access to the curriculum. These strategies will be identified on the school's website in their SEN Information Report, and in their school offer on the Local Offer website.

You will find more information about Staffordshire's Local Offer in our leaflet "The Local Offer". This is available on the Parent packs and leaflets page of our website (www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps). You can also ask for a printed copy by emailing sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk or ringing 01785 356921.

A small number of children need additional support (see the section on "SEN Support" below). This involves a more detailed and structured teaching approach or further changes to the teaching methods to allow them to be included in lessons.

SEN Support

If your child's difficulties are such that they are placed on SEN Support, the school will follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process and set up an individual learning plan. You, and your child, will be involved in this. Outside agencies and specialist support may also be asked to give their advice. Your child's progress will then be regularly monitored and reviewed.

A booklet explaining SEN Support in greater detail is available from SEND Family Partnership by telephoning 01785 356921 or emailing sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk It is also on the website at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps

If your child is meeting their targets and making good progress, it may be possible to reduce the support. If not, the school may ask for advice from their SENSS (Special Educational Needs Support Service) learning support teacher or Educational Psychologist. Your permission will always be sought before this is done.

[SENSS is now part of the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Service (SENIS) provided by Entrust, the provider for Staffordshire Local Authority. Their website is: www.entrusted.co.uk]

The input may include:

- Looking at the school's assessment of the child
- Reviewing the strategies that have already been tried
- Helping consider how the child's needs can be met
- Thinking about how the school could adapt the learning environment

- Planning what to do next
- Drawing up targets as part of the child's learning plan
- Providing appropriate training for school staff.

What help is available within Staffordshire schools?

There is a lot of help and support available within Staffordshire schools for pupils who are having difficulties. For pupils who have specific learning difficulties this includes:

Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative

In 2002, Staffordshire introduced a Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative in partnership with the British Dyslexia Association.

The initiative is built on evidence that shows that more children are successful when taught using "dyslexia-friendly" teaching methods. These methods rely on encouraging children to learn using all of their senses – sight, hearing, movement, touch, etc. This multi-sensory approach has benefits for all children. Dyslexia-friendly methods will help everybody.

The SENSS team support schools in becoming dyslexia-friendly.

There are three levels of dyslexia-friendly status:

Entry Level:

At entry level schools are expected to show evidence that their classroom teaching uses a multi-sensory approach. Parents can be assured that even at this first level of the process, staff have had awareness-raising training and

governors have been involved too. This will be verified by their SENSS teacher.

Full status:

Full status reflects a deeper level of knowledge with a growing and embedded approach across the school.

Enhanced status:

Enhanced status reflects a long term commitment to embedded good practice and a holistic approach to the other difficulties that may be found alongside dyslexia.

Specialist Support Centres

This is the specialist provision in Staffordshire for pupils who are dyslexic. There are four Key Stage 2 Specialist Support Centres in the county for children of primary age, one in each District.

The Centres provide support through

- Centre Support
- Outreach Support
- Monitored Outreach

Centre Support:

A pupil attends a Specialist Support Centre for a minimum of six weeks up to a maximum of three terms. This is reviewed on a termly basis.

The Centres provide individual education programmes to teach literacy, and sometimes numeracy, skills to children who have been identified as requiring specialist provision.

The pupils remain on roll at their mainstream Primary School and attend the centre for one or two sessions (either morning or afternoon) each week.

Numbers are kept low (no more than six pupils each session) with two specialist teaching staff employed to allow an individual programme to be set up for each pupil. This may include programmes to develop literacy and/or numeracy, and to raise self esteem, depending on the needs of each child.

Close liaison between the centre, home and the mainstream school makes sure that the strategies and programmes are supported in all settings.

Your child's school can make a referral for attendance at a Specialist Support Centre. School must provide evidence of a lack of progress despite the support they have given; this would normally be over a minimum of two Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles.

The aim is to equip the child with strategies and skills to enable them to be successful, with appropriate support, in their mainstream school.

Outreach Support

A pupil receives support in school for a minimum of six weeks up to a maximum of three terms. This is reviewed on a termly basis.

Monitored Outreach:

A pupil receives support in school for six weeks. A learning programme will be devised and the specialist staff will model strategies to be delivered by staff in school at the end of the support period.

Criteria

There are criteria for which model of support is provided through the Specialist Support Centres.

Centre/Outreach provision:

- Location
- Evidence of at least two cycles of monitoring and review implementing the advice given by SENSS
- A widening gap between the child's attainment and age-related expectations
- Lack of progress from the starting point, despite targeted support

Monitored Outreach provision:

- Slow progress from the starting point, despite targeted support.

Process

The process to apply for support from the Specialist Support Centres is:

- School and parent agree that school will make an application, with advice from a learning support teacher
- Entrust acknowledges the application and lets the school know the date when this will be considered
- The place and type of support is agreed by the Specialist Support Centres panel
- School and parent are notified of the decision
- An initial meeting is arranged by the Centre with the school, parent and pupil.

For more information on the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative or the Specialist Support Centres, please contact:

Kate Plant, Specialist Support and Inclusion Manager
cathryn.plant@entrust-ed.co.uk

Helping your child at home

As part of the dyslexia-friendly initiative, the SENSS team produced a pack for parents of children at Key Stages 1 and 2 that contained ideas for how parents can help and support their child at home. This pack describes games and activities that will be fun, while also helping a child to build on the key skills that they need.

A copy is available for parents to borrow from the SEND Family Partnership library (see below).

Some books that parents may find helpful include:

- "So you think you've got problems?" by Rosalind Birkett
- "Dyslexia – how would I cope?" by Michael Ryden
- "Reading Difficulties and Dyslexia Booklist" lists books which are easy to read but with interesting content published by the Book Trust
- "Dyslexia-friendly Books" is a list produced by Lovereading4kids
- "Digby the Dyslexic Dinosaur" was written in 2008 by the children at Stafford Dyslexia Centre and will be helpful for other children

These books are all in the SEND Family Partnership Book library; ring 01785 356921 or email sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk

We also have a number of other books which you can borrow to help explain dyslexia to your child, as well as useful books for parents and teachers.

Other sources of help

There are a large number of voluntary organisations, businesses, charities and local support groups dedicated to dyslexia. Some are listed below. This information is provided in good faith and does not constitute a recommendation.

Local Groups:

Dyslexia Association of Staffordshire (DAS)

22 Hartshill Road

Stoke-on-Trent

ST4 7QU

Tel: 01782 848 784

Email: das@dyslexiastaffordshire.co.uk

www.dyslexiastaffs.org

Dig-iT (Dyslexia Information Group in Tamworth)

Tel: 07534 513338

Email: office.tamdyslexia@gmail.com

www.dig-itam.weebly.com

National Groups/Organisations:

The British Dyslexia Association

Unit 8

Bracknell Beeches

Old Bracknell Lane

Bracknell

RG12 7BW

Helpline number: 333 405 4567

www.bdayslexia.org.uk

Dyslexia Action

10 High Street
Egham
Surrey
TW20 9EA

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Dyslexia Action (tel: 0300 303 8351)
(previously called The Dyslexia Institute) has
local assessment and teaching centres at
Stone

stone@dyslexia.org.uk

Sutton Coldfield

sutton@dyslexia.org.uk and

Derby

derby@dyslexia.org.uk

IPSEA

This is a charity offering free advice to parents
and carers on special education.

www.ipsea.org.uk

Tel: 0800 018 4016

**There are a large number of websites devoted to dyslexia.
Again, these are not recommendations, but may be a starting
point for you.**

2 Simple Software

www.2simple.com

Barrington Stoke

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

Crick Software Ltd

www.cricksoft.com

Crossbow Education

www.crossboweducation.com

Enabling Computer Supplies Ltd

www.enablingcomputers.com

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre

www.arkellcentre.org.uk

iansyst Ltd	www.iansyst.co.uk
Inclusive Technology Ltd	www.inclusive.co.uk
LDA	www.ldalearning.com
Learning Materials Ltd	www.learningmaterials.co.uk
Multi-sensory Learning Ltd	www.msl-online.net
Nessy Learning Ltd	www.nessy.com
REM	www.r-e-m.co.uk
SEMERC Smart Kids (UK) Ltd	www.smartkids.co.uk
Toe-by-Toe	www.toe-by-toe.co.uk

The law and further reading

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Disabled children and young people

A child or young person has a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if they have:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

“Long term” is defined as ***“a year or more”*** and ***“substantial”*** is defined as ***“more than minor or trivial”***.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools and other education providers have towards disabled children and young people;

- They must not discriminate in relation to admission
- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise in the way it provides services
- They must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers



Staffordshire SEND Family Partnership is funded by Staffordshire County Council. It operates independently as a confidential service for parents and carers of children and young people (0 -25) with special educational needs and disabilities.

To contact the SEND Family Partnership (Staffordshire's Information, Advice and Support Service):

Tel: 01785 356921

Email: sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk

Facebook: Staffs SEND Family Partnership

**You can find out more information at:
[www. www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/sfps)**

If you, or someone you know, would like a copy of this booklet in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in languages other than English, please contact SEND Family Partnership on 01785 356921 or email: sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk