

So you think your child might have Dyslexia? "Let's Talk"

Dyslexia is also known as a specific learning difficulty or SpLd. Children with Dyslexia have an "unexpected" difficulty in developing certain literacy and numeracy skills. This difficulty is unexpected because the child may develop some skills very easily- for example may be as good at thinking about Science or Technology as her/his friends but may have a lot more difficulty writing it down or reading about it.

Children with dyslexia often have poor short-term memory, especially for information that has to be remembered in a certain order. Remembering phone numbers and complicated instructions are often a problem. Spelling is also more difficult, as is remembering tables and learning for tests and exams. There may also be a tendency to read or spell a word correctly on one line, only to make a mistake with the same word further down the page.

There is often a pattern of "good days and bad days." On a good day difficulties may almost disappear and the child will be able to work effectively and achieve success. However on the bad days even familiar words will appear "strange" and need to be worked out from scratch.

What can teachers and parents do to help

- Make sure the child understands that it is ok to be dyslexic and that mistakes are the positive indication of effort and hard work.
- Parents in particular should avoid talking about their child's difficulties when s/he is listening
- Listen to the child's problems and make it clear that you understand
- Agree with the child a set time each night for homework, but be prepared to be flexible in exchange for a firm guarantee regarding when the work will be done
- Agree with the school how long each piece of homework should take and support the child to stop once the time limit is reached,
- Keep instructions brief and preferably one bit at a time.
- Give the child time to think before expecting a response to instructions
- Start learning tasks early and try to make them "hands on." For example, learning spellings is much easier when the child uses letter tiles (e.g. Scrabble letters) to build words
- Try to keep learning "uppermost" in a child's mind by playing games and asking for explanations and clarifications – asking a child to explain an idea is a good way to develop understanding and learning.

For further information contact:

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