Hints and tips for helping dyslexic children at

 home



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**Weald Community Primary School**

**Help with Literacy:**

There are 200 key words that children need to know – find out more using the Dolch list on the Dolch website. [www.k12reader.com](http://www.k12reader.com) has good exercises, word searches etc that can help with learning these key words.

Games to help with literacy and numeracy can be found at [www.turtlediary.com](http://www.turtlediary.com).

Wordshark is a computer program that combines the fun and excitement of bright, multi-sensory games with the serious task of learning to read and spell. Wordshark is available to purchase for £69.99 online – go to [www.wordshark.co.uk](http://www.wordshark.co.uk)

Allow your child to have frequent breaks and be patient when their reading is sometimes slower and seems more difficult.

**Specific Help with Spelling**

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) is a lifesaver at literacy homework time! Put into the site how you think a word will be spelt and it will give you the correct spelling. Use in conjunction with the complex sounds chart and continue to help your child build their spelling skills

www.scholastic.co.uk has games for literacy and maths – a particular good one is synonym toast at www.scholastic.com/worldgirl/synonymtoast

Use an ACE dictionary available relatively cheaply from Ebay. **Websters** dictionary for children are also good as they use pictures and colour

Smell as a sense can be useful in evoking memory. Your child can try writing their spelling words with smelly pencils ie chocolate when learning them. This can help if the same pencil is used during spelling tests. Learning with aromatherapy oil can also assist in the same way.

**Help with Maths:**

Numbershark is a program to help anyone improve their numeracy. It addresses many of the difficulties which lead students to dislike maths. Number shark is available to purchase online – go to [www.wordshark.co.uk](http://www.wordshark.co.uk)

Academic skills builder is a site with games to make maths practice fun. Find at www.arcademics .com

Your child can practice maths and English online at uk.IXL.com for 15 minutes free each week or £7 for unlimited use. Exercises are split by year so be careful to select games at the appropriate age & stage for your child.

A ruler can be used as an instant number line. Use squared paper and coloured protractors. Dyslexic protractors are available that are less “fussy” with fewer marks and numbers.

**Tips for Visual Learners:**

Make notes using several colours – the brain tends to switch off when the colour is monotone. Use colour pens, colour post it notes and different coloured paper & folders.

When note taking, encourage picture drawing rather than using words. I.e. if making notes on a science experiment, draw a picture with key words.

Use pictures or diagrams to learn any information involving a sequence i.e. if they struggle to remember the sequence of get dressed, do your teeth and comb your hair, draw three pictures that are displayed in a prominent position to help prompt their memory.

For children with memory problems, leave post it notes around the house to help them remember i.e. if packing their school bag always causes an argument in your house, put a post it note on the mirror where they do their hair.

Eye Tracking exercises can help a dyslexic learner improve their comprehension relating to missing out word as they read. You can find sample exercises at www.phonicslessons.co.uk

**Tips for kinesthetic Learners (learning by touch):**

Have a squeezy stress ball or ball of bluetack available to help concentrate. Your child should be allowed to play with this whilst they are doing their homework.

Can their learning be put into a roleplay? This will help them remember if they are taking part.

**Tips for Auditory Learners (learning by hearing):**

Encourage discussions rather that writing down as this will help the child to retain the information.

Use a tape recorder to record lessons. This is also good for revision as an auditory learner will learn better if they listen to their own voice.

Use Rhythm and Rhyme to learn facts i.e. horrible history songs, all of which are available on YouTube, are great for learning facts, dates and sequences. Dyslexics are very creative - can they make up their own song?

Encourage auditory learners to ask lots of questions during lessons!

**Tips for Organising and Time Management:**

Have a visual timetable for clubs and activities – use pictures not words.

Allow your child to wear different coloured rubber band bracelets to help them remember things i.e. an orange band means you must bring your PE kit home from school, a yellow ones means bring maths homework home. Cotton friendship bracelets can also be used.

Help them prepare in advance of settling down to homework – give them a drink and snack whilst you set out their pencils, rubbers and other equipment.

Use a timer for homework so you child can see how the time is progressing. This can help them to remain focussed.

Ask their teacher if you can be a scribe – you can write or type up their work whilst they are dictating to you.

**Memory Techniques for Children:**

Use Acronyms i.e. take the first letter from the things you need to remember and make a new word ie to remember the great lakes, learn the acronym HOMES for Huron, Ontario, Mitchigan, Erie and Superior.

Use Acrostics – take the first letter of each word to remember a sequence list i.e. *Man Very Early Made Jars stand Up Nearly Perpendicular* to remember Mercury, Earth, Jupiter, Uranus, Pluto, Venus, Mars, Saturn, Neptune

Rhymes – ie thirty days hath September or Step right in, don’t be left out to remember the movement of blood in and out of the heart. Again, a creative dyslexic will be able to make their own fantastic ways to remember.

Create a story to remember things i.e. to encourage your child to bring home her football kit, she could make up a similar story to this one: *the girl went to the park and found a parcel left on the football pitch. She opened it and found the most wonderful pair of football boots and football kit. She took them home to show her mum who was thrilled!*

Think in pictures to memorize i.e. if you need to remember a phone number 251125 your child might picture 2 football boots, a car with 5 doors, eleven players on a football team, and a Christmas tree for the date of Christmas day.

**MindMapping:**

Always have the paper landscape, never portrait.

Each branch must be a different colour.

The aim is for the child to write down everything they know about the subject or what the story to contain. They can then filter out what they don’t need.

Practice on subjects they are familiar with to help them learn the technique.

**Assistive Technology to support Learning:**

Read&Write for Windows is an easy-to-use flexible toolbar containing support features to make reading, writing and research easier for dyslexics. The software has been designed to address some of the issues that people with dyslexia face daily, namely reading difficulties, writing difficulties, problems with spelling and general literacy support. It can be downloaded at [www.texthelp.com](http://www.texthelp.com). This is not a cheap support at £320 but you can download a free 30 day trial at the same website.

Use the spellchecker and thesaurus in Word if they are doing their homework electronically.

The “Dragon naturally speaking app” allows you to speak into your ipad or laptop and will put your verbal dictation into a typed format. Perfect for children who think quicker than they can write and consequently lose many of their creative thoughts. This is not a free resource and cost around £60.00.

A reading pen can read text as you move it along the page and it will read out to you the text. Various types are available from [www.scanningpenshop.com](http://www.scanningpenshop.com) but look around. Prices start at £10 and go up to £300 depending on function and scanning times etc. More expensive ones are allowed in secondary school for exam.

If you are able, changing the font and background on your PC can help a dyslexic learner. You can download a free font at [www.](http://www.dyslexiefont.com)opendyslexic.org. Alternatively change to comic sans MS or Aerial as these are the two most dyslexic friendly fonts available.

A free download for software to help read text is available at [www.naturalreaders.com](http://www.naturalreaders.com). This will read any printed or e-document. This is particularly useful for older children at revision time.

Mindmapping software for educational purposes are available at www.mindgenius.com for a cost of £60.

**Ideas for Breaks to take during homework:**

A dyslexic brain gets tired quickly – use these very quick exercises to boost your child’s learning when they get tired:

Attempt to juggle for 2 minutes – this brings the two sides of their brain together, enabling them to “re-boot.”

Partner them and take it in turns to throw a juggling ball with you right hand, left hand and then on one leg. You must catch with your right hand, left hand and standing on one leg as they do. This forces them to concentrate on balance which in turn encourages the brain to be focussed. Extend the game by throwing 2 juggling balls at once, kneeling etc etc. Make up your own way of throwing & catching using balance.

Try blowing one large bubble, not lots of small ones – this will concentrate their breathing without them realising.

Blow up a balloon with one breath – again this will concentrate their breathing.

**Proactive Help with Homework:**

Avoid Blank paper syndrome – help you child get started with a mind map.

Use different colours to plan out the homework if they don’t want to do a mind map. Dyslexics see the whole picture so help them break it down into chunks.

When doing spellings, work on just 2 or three a day, don’t attempt a whole list in one go

Offer help but ask what they would like help with – do they need company? Do they need a hand with the dictionary? Do they need help getting started? They may not know themselves so be patient.

Feeling stressed will affect their performance by 80% - encourage them to keep calm and take 5 deep breaths from the bottom of their lungs before they start.

When he/she has finished, asked him what went well so you can build up a personal tool kit of how to help.

**Games to assist dyslexics:**

Any matching games

Story cubes

Blink (good for increasing processing speed)

Dots (good for maths)

**Books providing good resources:**

Help you children with SPAG – Carol Vorderman (Spelling and Grammar)

Mind mapping for children – Tony Buzan

**Lifestyle Assistance:**

Supplements of Omega 3 make a big difference to dyslexics

Vitamin B helps with stress at exam times – take up to a month before your child sits the exams

Exercise whilst doing homework – just running up and down the stairs twice before returning to learning can boost your child’s focus and concentration.

**Positive Comments parents can say to their children:**

Think Growth Mindset!!

When your child says they can’t do it, correct them to say “you can’t do it…………….yet”