



This NEPS Handout has been developed by educational psychologists and is based on current knowledge in this area. It is intended as a guide only. Not all the advice here may apply to any one student or situation. Teachers and parents may wish to identify the strategies that will work best for them.

## **Dyslexia-Tips for Parents- Primary Aged**

### **Be aware of:**

- Discuss your child's learning difference with your child in a positive supportive way at an age appropriate level. The material for parents in Understanding Dyslexia, a Guide for Schools (DES and DENI) may be helpful.
- Make sure they get opportunities to learn through experiences other than school (e.g. TV documentaries, visits to museums etc.).
- Learn more about dyslexia ([www.dyslexia.ie](http://www.dyslexia.ie), [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)). The Dyslexia Association runs a course for parents. This course is run in various locations around the country - see [www.dyslexia.ie](http://www.dyslexia.ie)

### **Management issues and homework:**

- If your child is tired when they come home from school don't ask too many questions. Give them a break.
- Some children with dyslexia struggle with organisational skills. Help your child to organise himself/herself by establishing routines and time-tables at home (e.g. time for homework or wall calendar).
- Have a set time for getting schoolbag and uniform ready for the next day.
- Discuss any issues around homework with teachers and agree the time to be spent on homework and which parts will be given priority. Don't do your child's homework for them. Let the teacher know if there are particular areas that are causing problems.
- If homework takes a long time, try to reduce the amount of writing your child has to do (e.g. re-writing questions).
- Have your child dictate the answers to some questions and write out their answers making sure that this arrangement is agreed with the teacher.
- Read the text from school books so that your child can concentrate on listening and understanding.
- Break big tasks into smaller ones where the parts are manageable and set achievable goals.

### **Oral language and listening:**

- Remember that talking to children increases cognitive and language functioning.
- Get your child to tell / re-tell stories, talk about things they have seen and done or are planning to do.
- Work on developing vocabulary (many children lose out on extending their vocabulary because they are not doing the same amount of independent

- reading as their peers).
- Respond to your child's observations and encourage them to respond to questions, give opinions etc.

### **Liaison/ Partnership:**

- Meet with your child's teachers to set realistic targets and share success stories. When discussing a Support Plan or IEP (Individual Education Plan) discuss homework, method for spellings etc.

### **Reading:**

- Involve your child in selecting reading materials. Read to your child as often as possible. Keep it short and fun (10 minutes a day). Finish up where they are enjoying the story and want more!
- Ask your child's teacher for information on Paired Reading.
- Go to the library on a regular basis and keep up-to-date on books peers are reading.
- Help your child access books on CD and listen to them together while following the text in the book.
- Let your child see you reading for enjoyment and for different purposes.
- Use everyday opportunities to encourage reading e.g., signs, adverts, greeting cards, computer games, playing board games / card games etc.

### **Spelling/ Writing:**

- Develop a family habit of writing notes and leaving messages.
- Get your child to write thank you notes and to make and send greeting cards.
- Get them to help you when you are making lists (e.g. when planning an activity or shopping).
- Talk to teachers about the method used at school for learning spellings (e.g. Look, Cover, Write & Check or other method) and use the same system at home.
- Concentrate on learning a few spellings each week/month with opportunities for repetition/reinforcement.
- Using a computer, particularly a word processor, can be a great help. If possible, encourage your child to learn to touch type.

### **Self-esteem:**

- Avoid making comparisons with other children (including relatives). Success should be measured against self, not others.
- Focus on what your child 'can do' and give genuine praise.
- Encourage participation in activities in the community / after school.
- Encourage interests in a wide variety of things to help discover your child's talents.
- Show that you value your child's opinion by quoting them or acting on their suggestions.
- Promote positive thinking by getting your child to use positive commenting e.g. 'I can read this' or 'I can finish this task'.
- Challenge any unhelpful reason a child gives for his success or failure and suggest an alternative.