



# Explaining dyslexia to children

**Understanding dyslexia can be confusing for adults as well as children so it is important to talk about it, even if you don't know all the answers.**

Every child is different and finding out they're dyslexic will affect them in different ways.

Tell your child that they learn in a different way and so it will help them to be taught in different ways. Explain that dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence.

Children can feel different emotions when they are told that they have dyslexia. Some see it as a good thing because it explains why they have been having difficulties. They may be relieved. Others might feel that they are 'different' from their friends and classmates.

Lots of people are dyslexic – 1 in 10 people – and it can be mild or more severe. There are lots of things that can help children with dyslexia do well in education, enjoy their hobbies and get a good job. Dyslexia should not hold anyone back from doing whatever they want to do.

**Focus on their strengths, perhaps they have:**

- strong visualisation skills (good for art, science, crafts, engineering)
- strong problem-solving skills
- strong interpersonal skills
- other skills and talents and things they enjoy

**Things that can be hard for children with dyslexia can include:**

- problems with memory, organisation and sequencing problems (putting things in order or following patterns)

- difficulties with reading, writing
- extra effort is needed to do some things which is very tiring.

However, it is important to stress that there are ways round these things:

- talk about dyslexia in a positive way
- encourage them to have a growth mindset
- say you don't know all the answers because everyone is different but that you will find out together
- find information from places like reliable sources on the internet, books, other people, Dyslexia Scotland's website, Helpline and publications
- ask your child what they find easy as well as what is difficult
- look at each task and work out with your child why something is easy or hard
- talk about things other than dyslexia as well because they are also important to your child
- make sure the school has all the information they need about your child. Help your child to write or speak about what dyslexia means to them and what helps. This will help classmates as well as teachers understand and help keep a positive 'can do' attitude.
- include brothers, sisters and other family members so they understand the positives and negatives and can help.

## What other parents suggest

"I didn't want to gloss over the fact that being dyslexic is challenging when it comes to school work. However, I also wanted to focus on what she could do well, how her thinking was different and how she could use her strengths to get where she wants to be. She said it helped her because she stopped seeing her problems as hurdles to struggle over but more of an interesting set of gates to open."

"When talking about dyslexia with my son I talked a lot about him being intelligent as he thought he wasn't and was feeling so bad about himself and comparing himself with his friends all the time."

"My daughter gets frustrated when people say learning 'difficulty'. It really should be a learning difference - nothing is difficult if you teach it to her in her learning style."

## Books and resources that help explain dyslexia to children and young people

**Dyslexia Unwrapped** a website for children aged 8+

**Mission Dyslexia - Find Your Superpower and Be Your Brilliant Self** by Julie McNeill, Paul McNeill and Rossie Stone

Margaret Rooke has a number of books for children and teens

**So, you think you've got problems?** by Rosalind Birkett

**Dyslexia - Talking it Through** by Althea

**Dyslexia: A Teenager's Guide** by Dr Sylvia Moody

**The Teenage Guide to Stress** by Nicola Morgan

**Dyslexia: A Parent's Survival Guide** by Christine Ostler