



## **Tips for parents of students with dyslexia or other literacy difficulties**

### What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that can be described as an unexpected difficulty learning to read. Children with dyslexia struggle with the recognition and manipulation of sounds in language, which affects their ability to decode words. This results in a difference between their ability and achievement; someone who is struggling with their literacy despite having the intelligence to be much more fluent in their reading and writing.

Although children do not outgrow dyslexia, the good news is that they can learn to read and compensate for their difficulties in other ways.

Not every child or young person who has literacy difficulties can be described as having dyslexia. There are many reasons that people can struggle to become fluent with reading and/or writing. Whatever the reason someone may be having difficulty, there are lots of ways in which you can help them to develop these skills. Below are some practical tips you can use to help, as well as some websites that can signpost you to more help and information.

### Practical tips to help develop literacy skills:

- Audio books are a great way to encourage literacy skills. Although they are listening to the book instead of reading, they will still be developing their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Encourage them to use a ruler when reading to keep their place on the page. Coloured overlay rulers are available as well, then can help focus and assist with any visual stress issues.
- Watch the news or documentaries together and then talk about what you have watched. This will again aid with comprehension skills and widen their knowledge.
- Encourage reading little and often. Sometimes newspapers, magazines or comic books can be less threatening than a whole novel and are easier to pick up and read for just 10 minutes at a time.
- Get them to practise typing on a word processing programme. Sometimes children and young people with literacy difficulties find typing easier than hand writing. If they become confident typing then this can help them in the longer term.
- Look out for Hi/Lo readers, these are books designed for older children and young people with a high interest level, but lower reading age.
- If there are common words that they are frequently misspelling then repeatedly drill them with the look-cover-write-check method of learning words, until they are confident with the spelling.

### Where to find more help and guidance:

British Dyslexia Association - <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

NHS guidance - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/living-with/>

Dyslexia Assist - <https://www.dyslexia-assist.org.uk/>