

# WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

Dyslexia is a learning disability that can affect a child's reading and writing skills. However, with the appropriate help and support, many children can overcome the challenges they face.



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE?

Children without dyslexia may experience some of these difficulties. However for children with dyslexia, they may experience *many* of these difficulties which *persist over time* despite effective teaching. Your child may experience difficulties in these areas:

### WORD, LETTER, SOUND RECOGNITION

- Have difficulties saying the sounds of letters; e.g. does not know that the letter 's' makes the /s/ sound.
- Struggle with learning and recognising letters.
- Have difficulties recognising high frequency or commonly used words.

### READING

- Enjoy being read to, but avoids reading aloud independently.
- Struggle to read books meant for his/her age.
- Unable to read unfamiliar or new words.
- Make many errors when reading, often confusing words that look alike.
- Read hesitantly and slowly.



### SPELLING

- Make many spelling errors in written work.
- Have difficulties with spelling despite repeated learning.

### COMPREHENSION

- Have difficulties understanding what he/she has read.

### MEMORY

- Have difficulties remembering words that have been taught.
- Have trouble remembering or following a sequence of instructions.



## MYTH BUSTERS

Children have dyslexia because they are lazy.

MYTH

- ✓ Dyslexia is not a result of laziness or a lack of motivation to learn. Children with dyslexia struggle with learning letters and sounds and how they **link** with each other. If they do not get help, they will face persistent challenges in learning which may eventually affect their motivation to learn.

All children with dyslexia display signs of letter reversal (e.g. writing 'b' as 'd').

MYTH

- ✓ Letter reversals are commonly observed in many young children without dyslexia, and is not always present in children with dyslexia. Dyslexia primarily stems from difficulties in learning the sounds of letters and how to blend these sounds to read words. It is not all about the **visual representations** of letters. Hence, letter reversal is not one of the **key** indicators of dyslexia.

Fish oils, tinted glasses and exercise-based interventions can help children with dyslexia.

MYTH

- ✓ There is currently not enough evidence to support the use of fish oils, tinted glasses, and exercise-based interventions for children with dyslexia. Effective interventions for children with dyslexia should include the teaching of letter sounds, reading, and spelling rules.

All children with dyslexia do poorly in the learning of the Mother Tongue Language.

MYTH

- ✓ As dyslexia is a language-based disorder, it can affect a child's learning of additional language. However, a child's performance in his or her Mother Tongue Language may depend on the child's interest and exposure to the language, as well as the amount of support received in learning it. Hence, having dyslexia does not necessarily mean that your child will also struggle with his or her Mother Tongue Language.

## WHAT CAUSES DYSLEXIA?

Dyslexia may be the result of differences in the way the brain **performs** on reading and spelling tasks. Current research also suggests that dyslexia may be genetic. A child is at a higher risk of dyslexia if someone else in the family has dyslexia.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD?



### ONLINE RESOURCES

You can refer to this website for more information on Dyslexia and strategies on how you can help your child!

[https://www.schoolbag.sg/story/activities-to-help-your-child-with-literacy#.V6p\\_7DCqqko](https://www.schoolbag.sg/story/activities-to-help-your-child-with-literacy#.V6p_7DCqqko)

## HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK AT HOME

### PREPARING FOR HOMEWORK TIME

As children with dyslexia sometimes struggle with organisation, it is important to encourage good organisational habits. A checklist can be useful to help your child work systematically. Here's an example you can use to help your child prepare for homework time:

	<i>Prepare all your writing materials.</i>
	<i>Check your school diary.</i>
	<i>Prioritise homework to be done first.</i>
	<i>Think about how to complete the task.</i>

### DURING HOMEWORK TIME

If your child has difficulty with a task, you can:

- ◆ Ask him/her to re-read the instructions. If needed, guide him/her to read difficult words (*e.g. refer to pictures, sound out the letters in the word*).
- ◆ Read or spell the word for your child if he/she takes too long, or shows signs of frustration.
- ◆ Check your child's understanding of the task by asking your child to explain it to you in his / her own words.
- ◆ Guide your child to search for answers to questions (*e.g. on the Internet, in books*) instead of providing them to him / her.

### BEFORE THE END OF HOMEWORK TIME

Encourage your child to check his / her work and ensure that all the words are spelt correctly.



## HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH READING

Children with dyslexia often do not enjoy reading and/or spelling. You can nurture your child's interest in reading and writing with some reading and spelling activities at home. An example would be:

### PAIRED READING

In this activity, you can read along with your child or take turns reading aloud to each other.

#### YOU NEED:

A storybook in which 95% of the words can be correctly read by your child. (NOTE: Choosing a book with many unfamiliar words may discourage your child.)

#### STEPS:

1. Choose a quiet environment conducive for reading.
2. Read at the same pace as your child, and with expression.
3. At the end of the text:
  - 😊 Praise your child (e.g. for effort put in reading and for words read correctly).
  - 😊 Briefly discuss the text with your child (e.g. main events in the story, how the themes or events relate to your child).
4. Ask your child to read the text on his / her own. Assure him / her that you will help with difficult words.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH VOCABULARIES

Your child needs to develop a good vocabulary to communicate effectively and understand what he / she reads. Children with dyslexia may need more help to build their vocabulary. Here's an activity you can do with your child to build his / her vocabulary:

### PERSONAL DICTIONARY

#### YOU NEED:

- 5 vocabulary words (e.g. chosen from books read with your child) and Personal Dictionary printout (Refer to websites for samples.)
  - ◇ E.g., <http://www.teacherprintables.net/free-printable-dictionary.html>
- Pencils and coloured pencils

#### STEPS:

1. Pick a word and read it aloud. Think about how it was used in the book.
2. Ask your child to repeat the word out loud, and write it in the Personal Dictionary.
3. Ask your child to try guessing the meaning of the word and praise your child for his or her attempt or any correct guesses.
4. Give a simple definition of the word and ask your child to write it in the Personal Dictionary.
5. Use the word in a familiar context, e.g. think about past experiences, provide imagined examples.
6. Ask your child to draw a picture that best captures the meaning of the word; use the word in a sentence and write the sentence in the Personal Dictionary.

\*For older children: Get your child to search for 2 common synonyms (i.e. word that has the same meaning) and antonyms (i.e. word that has the opposite meaning) of the word in the thesaurus.

