

Invited to Belong

Dyslexia

Condition:

Children with Dyslexia can experience a wide range of problems related to processing language. These problems are usually specifically linked to reading and spelling, but are sometimes also linked to problems with organisation and sequencing and can even include short term memory difficulties.

Current thinking suggests that these difficulties are related to inefficiencies in language-processing areas in the left hemisphere of the brain. There is evidence that suggests that these inefficiencies are linked to genetic differences.

Children with Dyslexia are affected by it for life, but its impact can be minimised by targeted literacy intervention, technological support and adaptations to ways of working and learning.

The effects of Dyslexia vary in severity and it is not uncommon for children with this condition to also have Dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Disorder, which, along with Dyslexia are categorised as 'Specific Learning Difficulties'. Dyslexia is NOT related to intelligence.

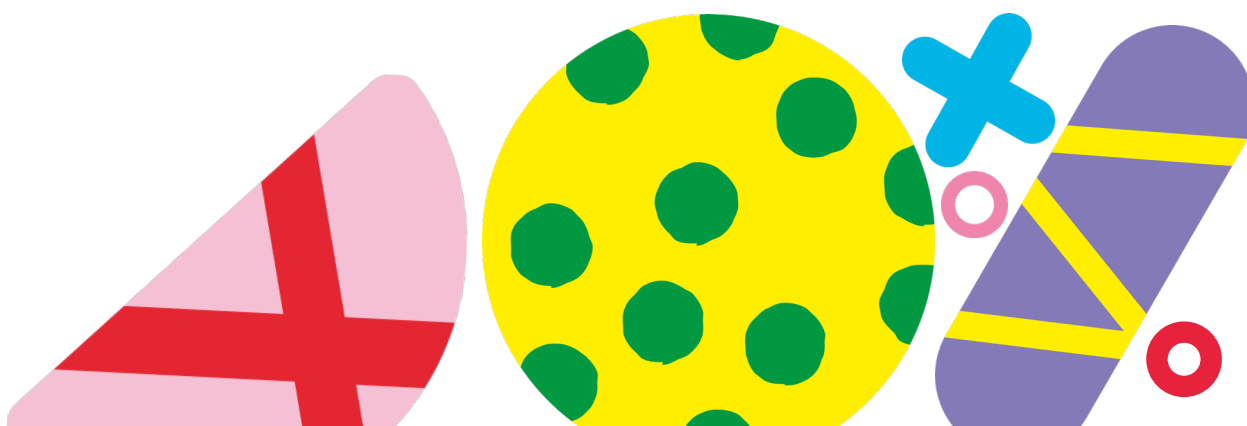
Approximately 10% of the population are affected by Dyslexia to some degree.

Problem Areas:

- Difficulties with processing language – usually related to reading and spelling.
- Organisation and sequencing difficulties.
- Short term memory problems.
- Possibly linked to Dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Disorder.

Support strategies for your Group:

- Provide written materials in a clear and easy to view way.
 - This means using a clear font such as Arial or Verdana.
 - Not cluttering the print with background pictures or watermarks.
 - Not using long paragraphs or sentences, but using shorter bullet points.
 - When using colours, use strong contrasts.





- If projecting something onto a screen or wall, use strongly contrasting colours so that text is more easily visible. Use a Dyslexia friendly (sans serif) font, and don't overlay text on top of an image or video, but keep them separate.
- Some children with Dyslexia may use coloured plastic overlay sheets or wallets which documents can be placed in to help them with their reading. Increasingly they may use an electronic tablet to allow them to set up text in a way that they can read. Be understanding in the use of these so that it helps the child without drawing undue attention to them.
- In some cases, children can have problems using coloured or shiny paper with text on. Pastel shades are usually suitable but other, stronger, colours should be avoided.
- When giving out notice sheets etc. make sure you also read important notices out so that those who struggle to read the notices are still able to understand them. Make sure you check with children with Dyslexia (privately, not in the group setting) that they have all the information and understand it.
- Do not unexpectedly ask a child with Dyslexia to read out loud. They may be able to do this with preparation and practice, however, so don't entirely disregard them from doing this either. Children with Dyslexia are often accomplished at covering up their reading difficulties, so get to know them and their parents to establish what they can be helped to do. Be sensitive when doing this, as many children will be embarrassed about their condition.

Further information:

The Dyslexia Association <https://www.dyslexia.uk.net>
British Dyslexia Association www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Thanks to Dyslexia Association for much of the material used in writing this article.

'Invited to Belong' has been developed in partnership between Urban Saints and Youthscape.



Youthscape

www.urbansaints.org/invitedtobelong