



ARENA
ACADEMY

SEND NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Proudly sponsored by CORE Education Trust

Dear parents and carers,

I hope your child has enjoyed the Spring Term so far, and is taking the opportunity to engage in the various activities which are on offer to students at Arena Academy. Last term you received information about who to contact regarding any SEND needs for your child. This person is your child's mentor and should be contacted in the first instance. We are in the process of appointing two new Teaching Assistants to build further capacity within our SEND Team. As a result of this, there will be some changes to the mentor cohorts. If your child will be receiving support from an alternative mentor moving forward, you will receive a letter informing you of this ahead of the LSP review meetings scheduled for the end of term. If you are unsure of who your child's mentor is, please e-mail Mrs Whitehouse or Mrs Bensley who will be able to provide you with this information.

Contact details for mentors are below:

Mrs K Whitehouse	SENDCo	kwhitehouse@corearena.academy
Mrs T Bensley	Trainee SENDCo	tbensley@corearena.academy
Ms T Kaur	Teaching Assistant	tkaur@corearena.academy
Mrs F Khalil	Teaching Assistant	fkhalil@corearena.academy
Miss P Maher	Teaching Assistant	pmaher@corearena.academy
Mrs A Qureshi	Teaching Assistant	aqureshi@corearena.academy
Mrs N Smith	Teaching Assistant	nsmith@corearena.academy

Following on from the Parent Support Meetings offered in the Summer, we will be working with our Outside Agencies to continue to support you to further understand a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Ahead of these support meetings, I would like to take the opportunity to use this newsletter to signpost you to additional support and provide you with further information about some of the most common needs and difficulties for students at Arena Academy. I hope you find this information useful. If you have concerns that your child has an undiagnosed need, please speak to your child's mentor.

If you have any questions or require any further support, please do not hesitate to contact your child's mentor who will be able to direct your concern to the most relevant person. I look forward to seeing you at our Spring LSP Review Days.

Mrs K Whitehouse, SENDCo

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Learner Support Plan Reviews

COLLABORATION

It was lovely to have so many parents and carers attend at the end of the Autumn term to review Learner Support Plans (LSPs). I hope that you found these meetings beneficial in understanding how your child is supported and what provision is in place for your child.

We plan to continue this review process each term and will continue to involve parents and carers in the review of provision for your child. Appointments will continue to be offered with the option to have a 15 minute slot of either a face-to-face meeting, an online meeting via Microsoft Teams or a phone call at your convenience. Hopefully this will enable you to attend and fit around any commitments or work. The Spring term review meetings are scheduled for Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th April 2024. You are now able to make contact with your child's mentor to make an appointment to book your review meeting. Please e-mail your child's mentor directly to book your Review Meeting.

The form is titled "My Strategies" and contains the following sections:

- Name: []
- Form: []
- Primary: []
- I like: []
- Ambition: []
- Target Grade: []
- photo: []
- What works for me (with a green smiley face icon)
- What doesn't work for me (with a red sad face icon)
- Target (with a yellow star icon)

If you are unsure who your child's mentor is, please contact **Mrs K Whitehouse** who will provide you with the relevant contact details to make your appointment.

SEND Coffee Mornings

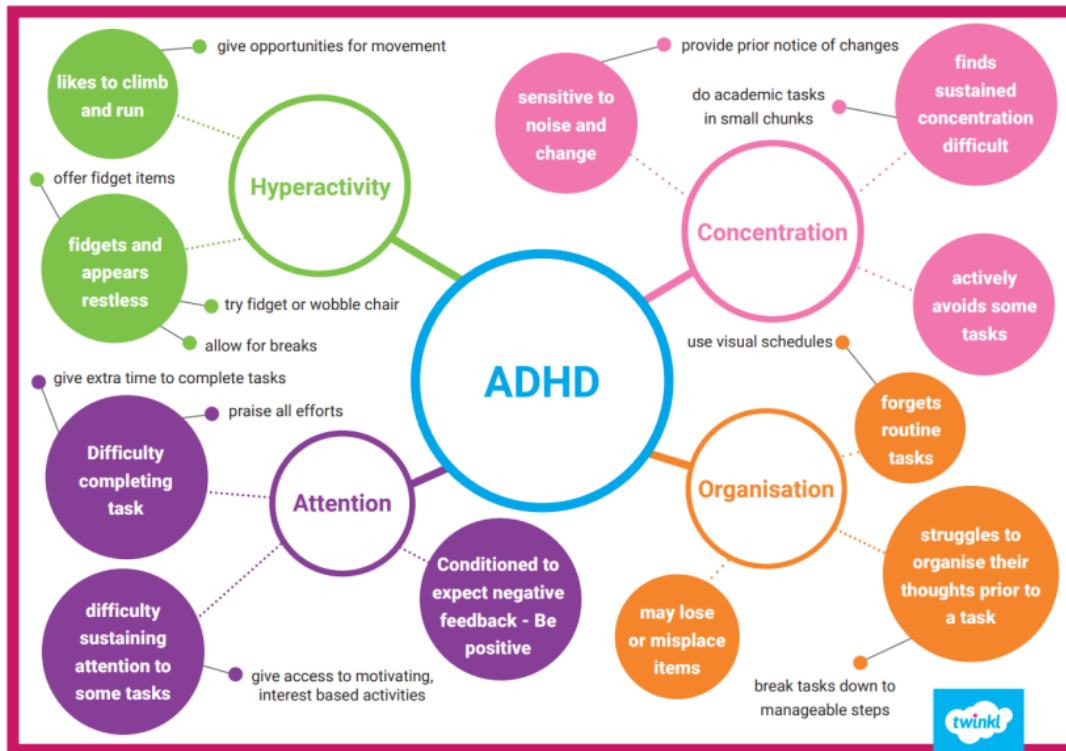
OPPORTUNITY



We hope to be able to further support parents and carers through SEND coffee mornings with professionals, following the success of the Autism and Dyslexia sessions in the Summer term. If there are any areas of concern, or if you would like more information on how to best support your child, please let us know what sort of sessions you would be interested in.

These sessions could focus on Speech And Language Therapy, Social Skills, Autism, ADHD, SEMH or any other area in which you feel you need more support.

Please email **Mrs Bensely**, Trainee SENDCo with suggestions for sessions so that we are able to formulate a calendar moving forward and invite professionals to attend and support you and your child.



Please note if you are awaiting a formal diagnosis of ADHD on the NHS, there is currently an approximate wait time of 2-3 years. A request can be made to expedite the referral, however the HNS are only currently processing these requests if a child has been permanently excluded.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age and may become more noticeable when a child's circumstances change, such as when they start school. Most cases are diagnosed when children are under 12 years old, but sometimes it's diagnosed later in childhood.

The symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can be categorised into 2 types of behavioural problems:

- inattentiveness (difficulty concentrating and focusing)
- hyperactivity and impulsiveness

Many people with ADHD have problems that fall into both these categories, but this is not always the case. For example, around 2 to 3 in 10 people with the condition have problems with concentrating and focusing, but not with hyperactivity or impulsiveness. This form of ADHD is also known as attention deficit disorder (ADD). ADD can sometimes go unnoticed because the symptoms may be less obvious.

Inattentiveness (difficulty concentrating and focusing)

The main signs of inattentiveness are:

- having a short attention span and being easily distracted
- making careless mistakes – for example, in schoolwork
- appearing forgetful or losing things
- being unable to stick to tasks that are tedious or time-consuming
- appearing to be unable to listen to or carry out instructions
- constantly changing activity or task
- having difficulty organising tasks

Hyperactivity and impulsiveness

The main signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness are:

- being unable to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings
- constantly fidgeting
- being unable to concentrate on tasks
- excessive physical movement
- excessive talking
- being unable to wait their turn
- acting without thinking
- interrupting conversations
- little or no sense of danger

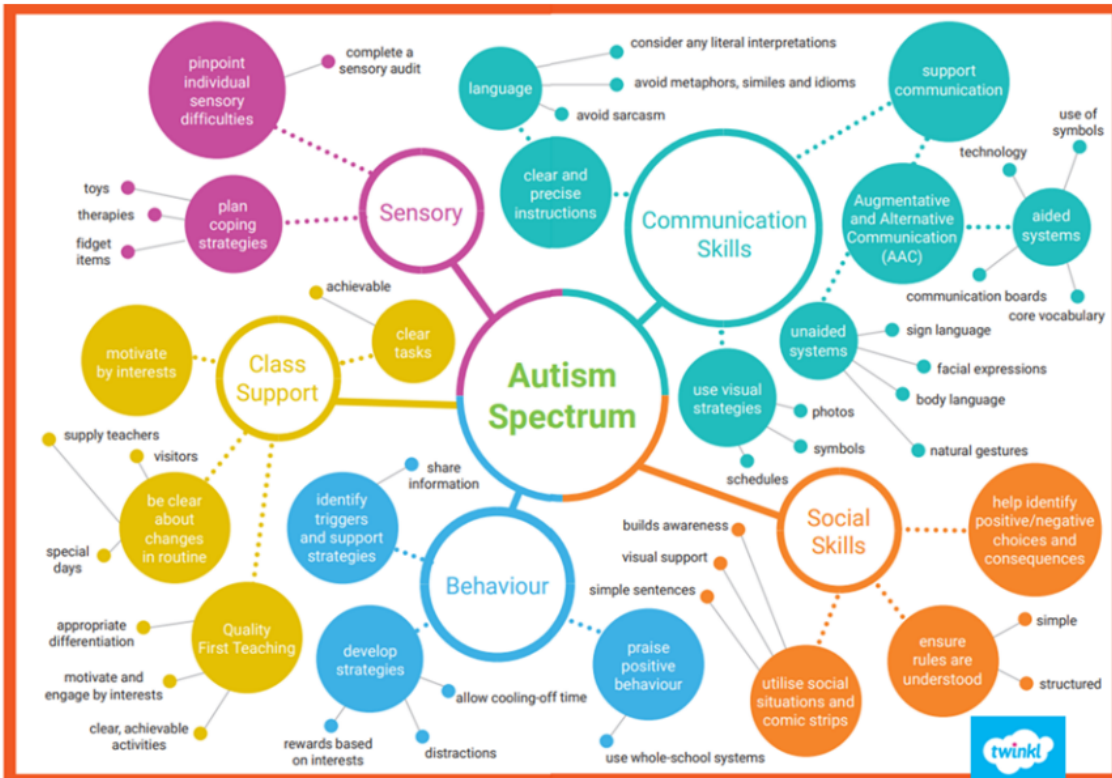
Tips for parents

If you're the parent of a child with ADHD:

- be sure your GP or specialist helps you understand the difference between ADHD and any other problems your child may have
- think about who else needs to know about your child's ADHD, such as their school or nursery
- find out the side effects of any medicine your child takes and what you need to look out for
- getting to know people at local support groups can stop you feeling isolated and help you to cope

The charity AADD-UK has a list of support groups across the UK, including groups for adults, parents and carers.

Taken from NHS online



Please note if you are awaiting a formal diagnosis of Autism on the NHS, there is currently an approximate wait time of 2-3 years. Once a referral has been made, there is nothing a school can do to request this be processed more quickly.

Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It means your brain works in a different way from other people. It's something you're born with. Signs of autism might be noticed when you're very young, or not until you're older. If you're autistic, you're autistic your whole life. Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a "cure". But some people need support to help them with certain things.

Autistic people may act in a different way to other people. Autistic people may:

- find it hard to communicate and interact with other people
- find it hard to understand how other people think or feel
- find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming, stressful or uncomfortable
- get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events
- take longer to understand information
- do or think the same things over and over

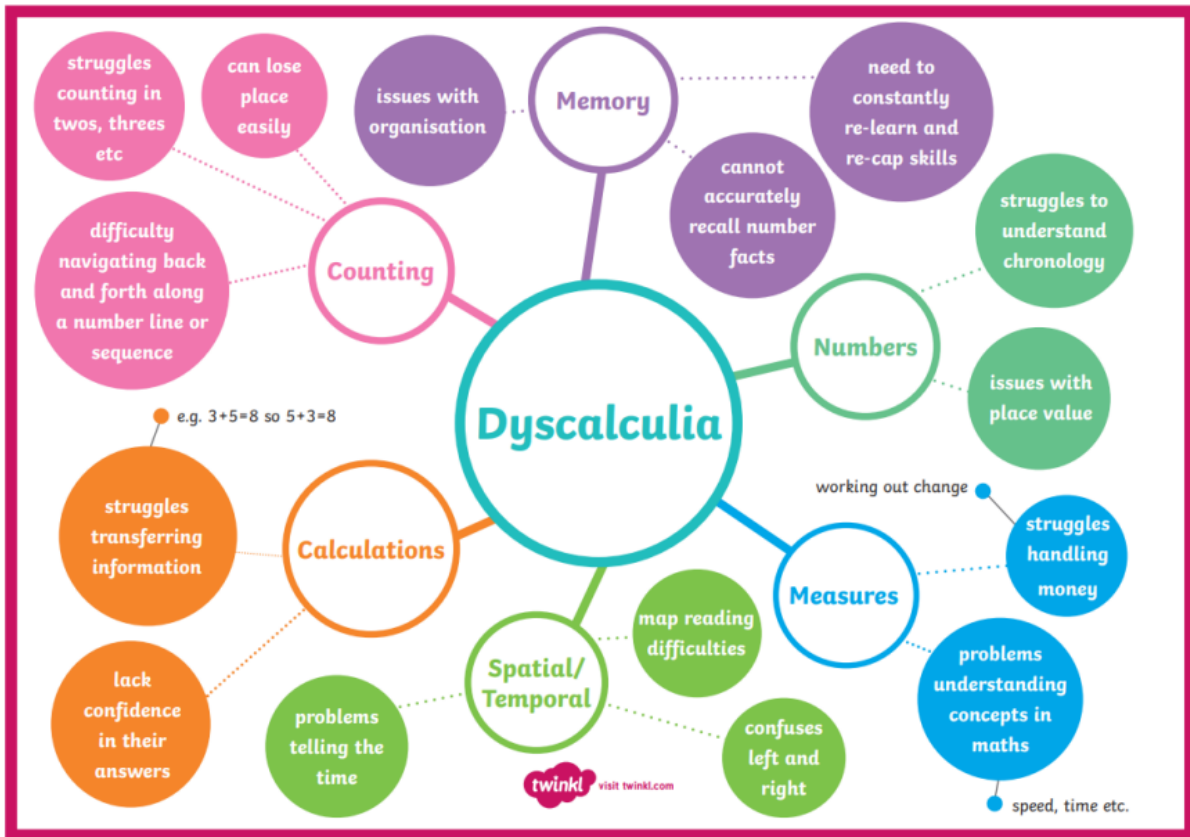
Things that can help you and your family:

- ask friends and family if they can help with day-to-day things or just be there to talk to
- get advice from other parents of autistic children or autistic adults – find out where to get support
- listen to other parents' stories – the charity healthtalk.org has stories from parents of autistic children, or you can search online for blogs, videos and books
- ask your local council for a carer's assessment – you might be able to get extra support and financial benefits
- think about doing a course for parents of autistic children – such as the Early Bird course from the National Autistic Society

Talking to your child about autism

It's your choice when you want to tell your child about their autism. Some parents do it straight away, while others wait until their child's a bit older. There's no right or wrong time. When you tell your child, it may help to:

- do it when they're feeling calm or relaxed
- talk to them in a place where they feel comfortable, with no distractions
- explain they do not have an illness, but they might need extra support to help them with some things
- explain they might find some things harder than other people, and some things easier
- bring them to a support group to meet other autistic children The National Autistic Society has a guide for parents and carers with advice on how to tell your child about their diagnosis



Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics. It will be unexpected in relation to age, level of education and experience and occurs across all ages and abilities.

Mathematics difficulties are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and they have many causal factors. Dyscalculia falls at one end of the spectrum and will be distinguishable from other maths issues due to the severity of difficulties with number sense, including subitising, symbolic and non-symbolic magnitude comparison, and ordering. It can occur singly but often co-occurs with other specific learning difficulties, mathematics anxiety and medical conditions.

(BDA Definition)

How Can I Help My Child at Home?

Helping your child to complete maths homework when your child had dyscalculia requires patience and an understanding of the condition. It is important for parents, caregivers, and family members to understand that children with dyscalculia are going to have a difficult time completing maths homework in the same way that other children do.

Children with dyscalculia may develop math anxiety when they are pushed to complete math homework without using tools or within a specific time frame. This will cause them to begin to avoid math or even fear it. Here are some guidelines to follow when helping your child with dyscalculia to complete math homework:

Follow the Teacher's Recommendations

Your child with dyscalculia will be learning maths using specific teaching methods and adaptations. Your child's teacher will have recommendations regarding how your child completes homework or if they complete maths homework at all. It is important that you as a parent follow these recommendations.

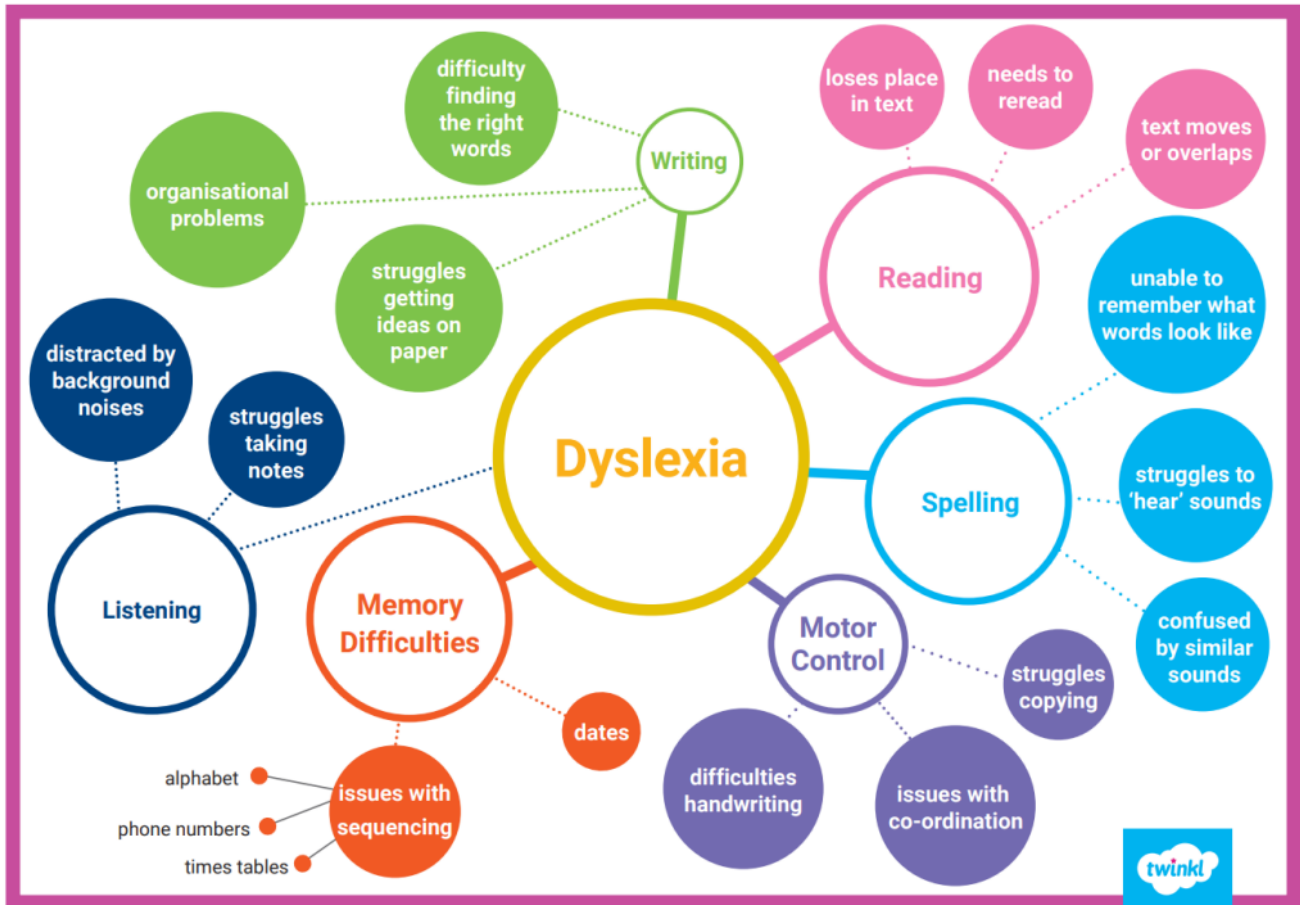
Do not expect your child who has dyscalculia to complete their math homework just like their peers who do not have dyscalculia. Allow your child to complete their homework in the way their teacher has taught them to do it. Make sure you communicate this to anyone else who might be supervising your children's homework, including siblings, relatives, and caregivers.

Good sources of information

www.stevechinn.co.uk maths explained

Ronit Bird Video www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gstqj5sEEoo

Taken from British Dyslexia Association and parentingpod.com



What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a neurological condition that affects the way a person processes language. It makes it challenging for a child to read, write, and spell. Dyslexia is not related to intelligence, and it affects children regardless of their background or education. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition, but with the right support, children can learn to manage their symptoms and achieve their full potential.

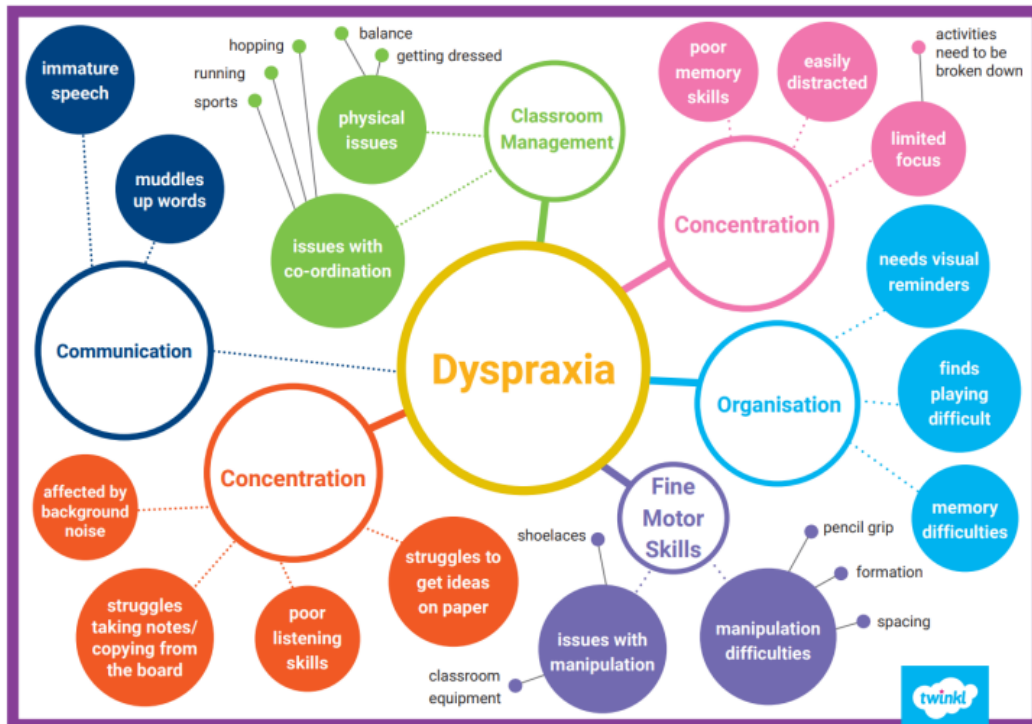
Dyslexia affects children in many ways, including:

- Difficulty reading fluently and accurately
- Struggling with phonemic awareness (the ability to hear, identify and manipulate sounds in words)
- Difficulty with spelling and writing
- Struggling with sequencing, organization, and time management
- Struggling with comprehension and understanding what they have read

These difficulties can make learning frustrating and challenging for children. They may feel like they're not good enough or that they're not as smart as their peers. It's essential to understand that dyslexia is a real condition and that your child is not lazy or unintelligent.

What Can Parents Do to Support Their Dyslexic Child?

1. Be patient and supportive - Dyslexia can be frustrating for children. They may feel like they're not good enough or that they'll never be able to learn to read. Encourage your child to keep trying and celebrate their successes, no matter how small.
2. Use multisensory teaching techniques - Dyslexic children often learn better through hands-on, interactive activities.
3. Read together - Reading is an essential skill, but it can be challenging for dyslexic children. Read with your child regularly and encourage them to read aloud together with you. This will help build their confidence and improve their reading skills.
4. Focus on their strengths - Dyslexia can make learning challenging, but it doesn't mean that your child doesn't have strengths. Focus on your child's strengths and interests and help them build their confidence in those areas.



Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination. It causes a child to perform less well than expected in daily activities for their age, and appear to move clumsily. DCD is thought to be around 3 or 4 times more common in boys than girls, and the condition sometimes runs in families.

Problems with movement and co-ordination are the main symptoms of DCD. Children may have difficulty with:

- playground activities such as hopping, jumping, running, and catching or kicking a ball. They often avoid joining in because of their lack of co-ordination and may find physical education difficult
- walking up and down stairs
- writing, drawing and using scissors – their handwriting and drawings may appear scribbled and less developed compared to other children their age
- getting dressed, doing up buttons and tying shoelaces
- keeping still – they may swing or move their arms and legs a lot

A child with DCD may appear awkward and clumsy as they may bump into objects, drop things and fall over a lot. But this in itself isn't necessarily a sign of DCD, as many children who appear clumsy actually have all the normal movement (motor) skills for their age. Some children with DCD may also become less fit than other children as their poor performance in sport may result in them being reluctant to exercise.

As well as difficulties related to movement and co-ordination, children with DCD can also have other problems such as:

- difficulty concentrating – they may have a poor attention span and find it difficult to focus on 1 thing for more than a few minutes
- difficulty following instructions and copying information
- being poor at organising themselves and getting things done

Support and Interventions

One of the main types of intervention used to help children with DCD manage their condition is known as a task-oriented approach. This involves working with you and your child to identify specific activities that cause difficulties, and finding ways to overcome them. For example, a therapist can help improve difficulties with specific movements by breaking the action down into small steps. They then teach your child to plan these individual movements and practice them regularly. Your child may also benefit from adapting tasks to make them easier to do, such as adding special grips to pens to make them easier to hold, or wearing shoes with Velcro fasteners rather than shoelaces to make dressing easier. Your child may be encouraged to exercise regularly as well, as this is generally considered to be beneficial for children with DCD. An alternative method to the task-oriented approach is the process-oriented approach. This is based on the theory that problems with your child's senses or perception of their body may be contributing to their movement difficulties. A process-oriented approach may involve activities aimed at improving your child's general movement (motor) skills, rather than helping them with a particular task or activity.



Sensory processing is when the nervous system processes the message it has received from the senses and the resulting motor or behavioural response. In sensory processing disorder (also known as Sensory integration disorder/dysfunction), the sensory signals are not interpreted in the typical way. A person with SPD will find it difficult to process and respond to the information received from the senses.

Examples of behaviours that may indicate sensory processing needs

These behaviours are not uncommon, but sometimes they can be persistent and impact on quality of life:

- Running out of busy places when there are lots of visuals and/or sounds present—This may be a child who cannot cope with processing so many different things at one time.
- Seeking lots of physical movement through the day—This may be a child who needs more information into their muscle and movement systems, to tell them where they are in space.
- Sensitivity to light touch—Your child may be very sensitive to unexpected or light touch and have an anxious response to it.
- Seeking heavy touch and hugs—Your child may seek lots of heavy touch, through hugs for example, to get more input to their touch system. This can be calming for them.
- Difficulty with posture and co-ordination— This may represent a child whose muscle and movement systems are not as efficient.
- Being overloaded by visual or sound input—This may affect their ability to concentrate .

What Can Parents Do to Support ?

Consider patterns of behaviour. Reasons may be many and varied, but among them may be some of the following:

- Your child may be trying to feed a sensory system that they are not so good at registering.
- If your child receives too many stimuli, they reach an overload state and this can lead to a state of high anxiety.
- Often children instinctively know what they need, and may be giving you clues as to what sensory input they are seeking, or what they are unable to cope with.
- Think about what things your child may be sensitive to; such as light touch or hair brushing.
- If your child is seeking more input, see if there are ways to support your child through sensory based activities that “feed” sensory needs in the right way (e.g. movement breaks between sedentary activities).
- Your child may seek certain sensory stimulation – this may be an attempt to “kick start” a system that is not as active as the child needs it to be.

Support for EAL - CORE Hello

RESPECT

We are very pleased to be able to offer support for those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) through our CORE Hello program which is offered at all schools within CORE Education Trust. If you are concerned that your child has not managed to grasp the English language well, use some of the prompts as a guide for you to refer your child. Please email **Mrs Whitehouse**, SENDCo, for further information.

New to English	Early Acquisition
Silent in the classroom	Uses English for social purposes
Copying/repeating words or phrases	Some skills in reading and writing
Minimal or no literacy in English	May understand simple instructions
May use first language for learning and speaking	Follows day-to-day social communication



Mental Health and Wellbeing

COLLABORATION

As a school, we understand and recognise the increasing need for support with mental health and wellbeing for our students, as a result we are pleased to say that we have been able to secure a number of counselling sessions through Two Ten Therapy which will take place during school hours in our Welfare Room.

Counselling can be a safe and confidential space for students to explore any concerns or problems they may be experiencing, some feel it can be helpful to speak to someone with a neutral standpoint which can help them to make decisions in their current circumstances or help them to understand situations from the past.

If you feel that your child could benefit from attending counselling sessions in school, please email **Mrs Bensley** with a brief summary of need.



Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544
 Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

 @YoungMindsUK

Support for Young People with SEND

COLLABORATION

Birmingham City Council Local Offer



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST



Help, advice and information about the services available for your child or young person from birth to 25 years with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).

www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk

Communication and Autism Team (CAT)




CAT recognises that parents and carers are fundamental to supporting the children and young people they work with and believe that working in collaboration is essential to promoting success, visit the website below for more information.

www.accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/communication-autism-team

Educational Psychology Service (EPS)



Educational Psychology  Birmingham
City Council

A team of professionals applying psychologically informed evidence-based practice to support the learning and development of children and young people from birth to early adulthood.

www.birminhameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Services/4524

Pupil and School Support (PSS)



We work with children and young people with cognition and learning difficulties, and specific learning difficulties.

www.accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/pupil-and-school-support

Physical Difficulties Support Service (PDSS)



Physical Difficulties Support Service
Parent/Carer Information



PDSS can offer advice on children accessing the curriculum and adapting the educational environment as well as recommending resources and equipment that could help and support your child.

www.accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/pdss