

HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

Homework can be a frustrating and upsetting experience for dyslexic children and their parents on a daily basis. Here are some tips to help make homework a less traumatic experience.

First of all, **remember** the purpose of homework is for your child to practise something that is already familiar. If homework is too difficult, you should discuss this with the teacher who issued it. Don't allow your child to become frustrated because homework tasks are beyond their skills or take too long. Setting smaller amounts of work and/or allowing extra time will often help.

1. Establishing a Routine

Develop a daily homework routine. A written or visual plan put in a prominent place is ideal. It should include a particular place set aside for homework and an agreed plan as to what happens after arrival home from school. It should also be flexible enough to take into account after-school activities. The homework place needs to be as quiet as possible, with a cleared space for work and items required at hand e.g. pens, pencils, rubber, books etc. The kitchen table is suitable if close supervision is required at busy times. Work out the best time for your child to do homework. Keep in mind that your child may be very tired after school – they have had to work harder than other pupils because of their dyslexia. They may need a break before starting homework.

2. Getting Started

- Break homework tasks into manageable parts
- Give breaks between different tasks
- Encourage your child to produce quality work rather than rushing to finish everything in one sitting
- **Do not** arrange for extra homework to help your child catch up – a dyslexic learner can become discouraged when faced with large amounts of work

Go over the homework requirements to ensure your child understands what to do. Read instructions aloud to make sure that the task is fully understood. If necessary, practise the first example or two with them. Help your child to generate ideas for

writing tasks and projects before they start writing. If necessary revise vocabulary that they may need. Sometimes you may to develop a writing plan.

Encourage your child to present their work using personal strengths – for example, pictures could be used if the child is good at art. When necessary and appropriate, arrange with the teacher to scribe so your child can get ideas on paper more accurately.

3. Checking and Monitoring Work

Help your child to learn editing, self-monitoring and checking skills so they can develop more independence in their work as they get older. For example, a simple process like **CAPS** can be helpful when proof reading work.

C = Capitals

A = Appearance

P = Punctuation

S = Spelling

Encourage your child to use the computer for written work. The use of a spell checker and touch-typing skills will have been taught in school – the Support for Learning team may have Typing Tutor programs and will help you select one that suits your child for additional practice. There are many writing aids for use on the computer – check with the school what software is used, and find out if you can provide this at home too.

If your dyslexic child is slow to complete work, encourage the use of a timer and see how much work can be completed in five minutes. But remember that if homework is regularly taking too long or is too difficult, you should discuss this with school staff.

Give your child lots of praise as they complete homework tasks. Be specific about what they have done well.

4. Organisation

Help the child develop a comprehensive, written homework plan, include revision of subjects as well as set homework tasks. Monitor time spent on homework and results.

Encourage your child to keep their school notes and work together in folders so they don't get mixed up, lost or damaged. Organise notes into subjects, and ensure that they are filed regularly. Colour coding of subjects can greatly assist organisation and planning.

If pupils are not writing their homework down accurately, arrange for them to check with someone in the same class at the end of the day. Or ask teachers to give them written homework instructions for more complex tasks.

Liaise with teachers regularly to check that pupils are completing homework tasks and are handing in work at school. Check that your child is taking the correct books and equipment to school each day. Develop a visual or written plan if this is an area of difficulty.

5. Study Skills

Make sure that your child has effective plans for approaching tasks like essay writing, coursework, study for examinations. Talk to the school's Support for Learning staff about these.

Build up independent work skills and problem solving strategies for use when the child is "stuck" or not sure of how to go about the homework. For example, get your child to think about several different ways they could complete the task correctly. They can also think about who to ask for help if the strategies tried are unsuccessful.

Revise work with your child before examination. Ask the Support for Learning staff to issue advice sheets. Encourage the child to make notes, underline key words, draw pictures etc when studying to aid memory.

6. Using Technology

Use of a computer to present homework often makes a positive difference to results in secondary school.

Access to subject textbooks, novels etc on tape or CD can greatly ease literacy requirements and ability to complete home and school work.