

# *What is STEPS?*



Support Team for Education in  
Primary and Secondary Schools





We are a support service to schools.

Schools can request our services if they have a concern with a child's literacy or maths progress.

The request is made through a referral process in discussion with the parents/carers.

All referrals go on a waiting list. It can take up to 10 months for STEPS to become involved.

# *What is Dyslexia?*



- Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly causes problems with reading, writing and spelling, although it doesn't look the same in all people.
- It's estimated up to 1 in every 10 people in the UK has some degree of dyslexia.
- Dyslexia is a hereditary difficulty with language processing and affects individuals throughout their lives. Its impact can change at different times in a person's life and difficulties can vary in degree too.
- Dyslexia frequently occurs alongside other learning differences.
- For some people, their dyslexia is identified early in their lives, but for others, it goes unidentified until they get older.
- Targeted support, classroom and exam accommodations can improve skills and reduce challenges at school (and at work).

# *Signs and Indicators*

The signs and impact of dyslexia vary from person to person and affect children and adults in different ways. Each person will have a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses but in general, people with dyslexia have trouble with decoding (sounding out words), encoding (spelling words) and fluency (reading at a good pace and without mistakes).

Common indicators to look out for:

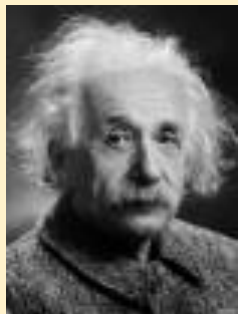
- problems learning the letters which speech sounds represent
- spelling that's unpredictable and inconsistent
- confusion over letters that look similar and putting letters the wrong way round (such as writing "b" instead of "d") in children older than about 8 years
- reading slowly or making lots of errors when reading aloud
- answering questions well orally, but having difficulty writing the answer down
- difficulty learning sequences such as days of the week or the alphabet
- slow writing speed and handwriting difficulties
- problems copying written language and taking longer than normal to complete written work.

# *Understanding the difficulties*

Children with dyslexia have to work much harder to achieve the same results as their peers. This can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety and failure.

Remember, your child is not being lazy if they come home from school and do not want to do homework or additional activities. They may be exhausted and will need time to relax and unwind when they get home.

# Dyslexia and areas of strength



Strengths

practical skills

creativity

global thinking

oral communication

resourcefulness

empathy

visualisation

honesty

sensitivity

motivation

perseverance


long term memory

problem solving

visual-spatial awareness



# *Celebrate the positives*



“Dyslexia is not a pigeonhole to say you can’t do anything. It is an opportunity and a possibility to learn differently. You have magical brains .... they just process differently. Don’t feel like you should be held back by it.”

Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice

# *Support at home*

- Make it fun.
- Include games.
- Work on projects together: cooking, planting seeds, planning a day out...
- Keep instructions/information short and concise.
- Have checklists/reminders on display.
- Encourage discussion about difficulties.





# Supporting struggling readers

- Try to keep anxiety levels down (your child's and yours)
  - keep relaxed and focus on sharing and enjoying books together.
- Keep reading sessions short and sweet!
- Before reading, have a 'walk through' the book.
- Try 'paired reading' or take it in turns to read a sentence, page, or chapter each.
- Audio books can be an enjoyable way of 'reading' age-appropriate material without decoding difficulties reducing enjoyment.
- Read along e-books can give a sense of independence.
- Your child is likely to need support choosing suitable books.
- Support skills which underpin reading – games like 'I spy' or swapping sounds in words are a fun way to strengthen skills.



# *Supporting Reluctant readers*

- Graphic novels, poems, joke books, magazines, or comics – bite-sized texts can be more appealing than a traditional book.
- Non-fiction books connected to interests can be a big hit and can be enjoyed without the pressure to read them from cover to cover.
- Model ‘reading for pleasure’ by letting your child see you reading.
- Try to get hooked on a book series! The best recommendations often come from other children.
- Giving choice – visiting the library can be motivating, as your child is in charge of what they are going to read.



## *Helping to read unknown words*

- Use letter and sound knowledge to ‘sound out’ the word and encourage use of meaning to support reading.
- Build confidence comment on good strategies used and praise attempts, even if incorrect.
- Give time *but* just provide the word if you sense frustration or if flow is being lost.
- It’s good to re-read favourite books, to develop fluency and confidence!

# *Supporting spelling*

- Encourage 'having a go' at spelling new words.
- Remember to use phonics when trying to spell.
- Encourage visual strategies too by asking, 'does it look right?'
- Practice writing words which are being learnt – the act of writing helps with memory
- Most primary aged children love a highlighter pen! Draw attention to the 'tricky bits' in words and highlight.

# Spelling Ideas

Step words

p  
py  
pyr  
pyra  
pyram  
pyrami  
pyramid



Rainbow writing



Can you make up a song or a rap?

Hidden words

Can you find the word 'said'?



Pyramid writing



children children children  
children children children  
children children children  
children children children  
children children children  
children children children  
children children

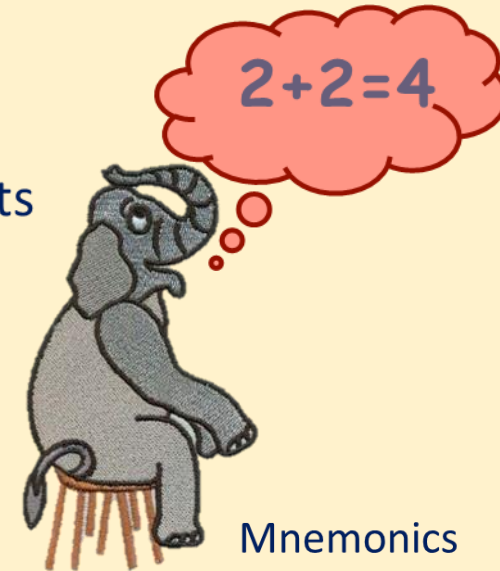
How many times can you write the word in 2 minutes?

'Decorating' the word

Over pronunciation

Wed-nes-day

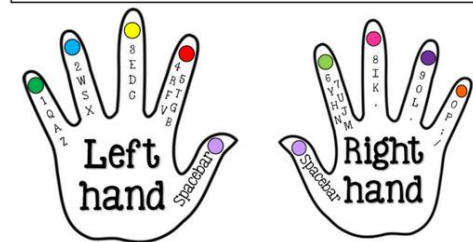
Big  
Elephants  
Can  
Add  
Up  
Sums  
Easily



Mnemonics

# Supporting writing

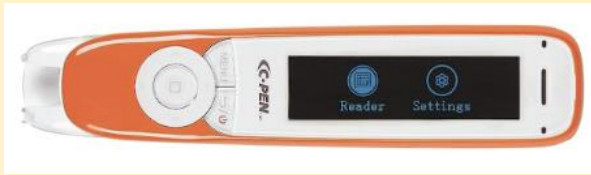
- Create purposeful reasons for writing: posters, birthday cards, invitations, thank you notes, messages on post it notes etc.
- Make personalised books.
- Help to generate ideas for writing tasks by discussing before putting pen to paper, for example creating mind maps.
- Practise typing skills (BBC Dance Mat, Typing Club, Touch, Type, Read and Spell)





# *Assistive technology for reading and spelling – particularly for older children*

Reading pens



Audio books



Use of a laptop

Computer readers






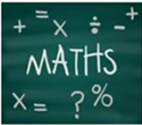
Speech to text



# Support with homework



- Create a homework routine - little and often works best.
- Have a checklist of tasks to complete.
- Discuss homework expectations with the class teacher.
- Be supportive of learning needs.
- Encourage frequent revision and practise.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 swimming	 reading	<del>Wednesday</del> <del>Wed-Nes-day</del> spelling	<del>Wednesday</del> Wed-Nes-day spelling  reading	 football	 maths	

*Thank you!*



[Janice.currie@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Janice.currie@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)