

My Guide to Getting Your Child Support at School

by Sarah-Louise Jeffries



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1 What are your child's difficulties?

Rate each of the possible challenges your child may face from 1-5, where 1 = no real issue and 5 = severe issue.

This list is by no means exhaustive, so use the blank rows to capture any other areas where your child experiences difficulties.

School reports of teacher assessments may help you to identify any that you perhaps haven't experienced at home.

Challenge	Rating 1-5	Additional notes
Reading		
Spelling		
Handwriting, letter formation		
Copying from white board		
Maths, numbers, counting		
Remembering instructions		
Co-ordination		

2 What are their strengths?

Dyslexics are very capable individuals who have many cognitive skills, despite varying degrees of information processing capabilities. They may have difficulties remembering information they see and hear, which in turn could affect literacy skills. It may also impact organisational skills. It is however important to remember that there are also a great many positives to thinking differently.

Many dyslexic people have excellent reasoning skills and do very well in creative and visual roles. The key is to understand these skills and give them the right tutoring to help make the most of them.

These are just some of the areas in which dyslexics can excel:

- Dyslexics are excellent at solving spatial puzzles and have a better recall of virtual environments than their non-dyslexic counterparts. This makes them successful in engineering, architecture or construction or in industrial / graphic design.
- They are also brilliant at connecting ideas in a non-linear fashion. They really do think outside the box and use critical thinking and logical reasoning to problem solve.
- They're really great at reading people, have great empathy and are very considerate of other people's thoughts and feelings.
- They have fantastic imaginations - there are a number of dyslexic artists, actors and authors with dyslexia. They have a keen sense of curiosity.



Write down your child's strengths

Note all your child's strengths with examples so that you can explain to them the advantages of being dyslexic.

Strength	Example



3 Approaching the school



Primary Schools

1. Your child's teacher is the first person you need to talk to. They spend every day with your child and will already have some insights into your child's difficulties and needs. They may already have some sort of an action plan in place. It will be your child's teacher that will ultimately be overseeing the plan, so it's best to keep them on side and not undermine them by approaching a more senior staff member first.
2. If you need to engage with someone more senior, you should ask to be referred to the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). They will have some experience of dyslexia and may have some ideas on how to help your child
3. If you aren't satisfied with the responses from the class teacher or the SENCO, you should then approach the head teacher who will discuss your child's needs with them

Secondary Schools

Schools have different systems in place, so check with your school how their system works. Their website should have details, but you may also speak with the year group leader, form tutor, subject leader, head of department or SENCO

"Both you and the school want to see your child succeed"

4

Meeting with school staff



The Discussion Considerations

Plan. Prepare.

- Write down what you hope to achieve with the meeting.
- Gather all your data - school reports, professional assessments, relevant correspondence between yourself and the school.

Support.

Take someone with you whose opinion you value and respect. Your partner, another parent, a friend or a professional for support.

Pay attention.

Be prepared to listen without interrupting, be open to suggestions and take time to consider them. Working together is in the best interests of your child.

Discuss follow ups and actions

Set next steps and dates for actions and follow up meetings.

If things don't go to plan...

If you are not satisfied with the way your concerns have been handled, you can appeal to the school governors, the chair of governors, the local parent partnership or the SEN department of the local authority.

Planning your meeting

This handy table will help you organise your thoughts and plan your meeting

When is the meeting?	Date:	Time:
Who are you meeting with?		
Name:		Role:
Specifics for discussion:		
What questions would you like answered?		

5 Documenting the agreed actions

Use this table to capture the outcome of the meeting and agreed actions

Dyslexic Challenge	Support agreed with school
Other agreed actions:	
Additional notes:	

6 Talking with your child

Talking to your child about dyslexia and keeping the conversation going is vital for their well-being and to help them cope better.

Knowing that the difficulties they have with learning is nothing to do with how intelligent they are, is great for their self-esteem and will help keep them motivated.

Understanding their dyslexia will enable them to explain it to others better and to encourage them to ask for help when they need it.

Feeling understood, supported and understanding their condition, will help them find their own strategies for learning and overcoming their difficulties.

Involving your child in the planning for their ongoing support at school helps them to know what to expect and enables them to let you know if they are not getting it.

The best gift you can give your child is knowledge about dyslexia - the advantages and disadvantages, so that they can advocate for themselves when necessary. So that they can raise awareness about dyslexia.

You can never know everything, but make a commitment to your child, that when they have a question about dyslexia, that you will help them find the answer.



"You can't know everything about dyslexia, but you can help your child find the answers."



More about Sarah-Louise Jeffries

There is a common assumption that many people make when it comes to Dyslexia. Some people believe that this learning difficulty is something which affects everyone in the same way, but this is simply not the case. This is why dyslexia assessments are important. No matter what age, gender or race you are, a dyslexic assessment can be conducted for anyone.

I use precise assessments to identify weaknesses and target those areas for improvement. This will help the individual, their parents and teachers understand their specific needs. It also means that the people around the dyslexic person will know how best to offer appropriate support and interventions when and if required.

How I work

Visit my website to find out [how I work](#)

<https://dyslexiasupportconsultancy.com/assessments/diagnostic-dyslexia-assessments/>

Qualifications and Accreditations

- BSc (Honours) Psychology (Bangor University)
- PGCE and Masters in Education (Durham University)
- Diploma in Teaching and Assessing Learners with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties
- APC – Assessment Practicing Certificate (recognises the professional achievement, training and skills of specialist teachers)
- Member of PATOSS (The professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties)
- Full and enhanced CRB check
- Member of Hampshire Dyslexia Association

Get in touch with Sarah



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