

2010

Dyslexia

Dyslexia - An Information leaflet

Education & Skills



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL



Starting school is, for most children, the beginning of formal learning.

In the early stages, work in language and number is based around play, games and activities but gradually children become ready to approach more formal, written work.

By Primary 3 most children have established the foundations on which to build future progress. Sometimes they will have received targeted support to reach this point.

Teachers use a range of approaches to help children to develop language and number skills.

In the course of normal classroom teaching and learning, they will note those children who are not making expected progress through any particular approach and will often try alternative strategies to help them. The majority of children will make good progress through these alternative approaches.

Each strategy that a teacher uses to help a child make progress in literacy also provides assessment information on what does and does not work for a child.

Some children, however, continue to experience difficulties with reading,

spelling and number work, and do not make the progress that is expected of them in these areas.

Some who continue to experience these difficulties can at the same time display satisfactory progress in other areas.

In cases where such discrepancies in performance exist, these can be confusing for parents and teachers and frustrating for children themselves. However, it is important to emphasise that not all children who might be described as experiencing dyslexic difficulties display these discrepancies.



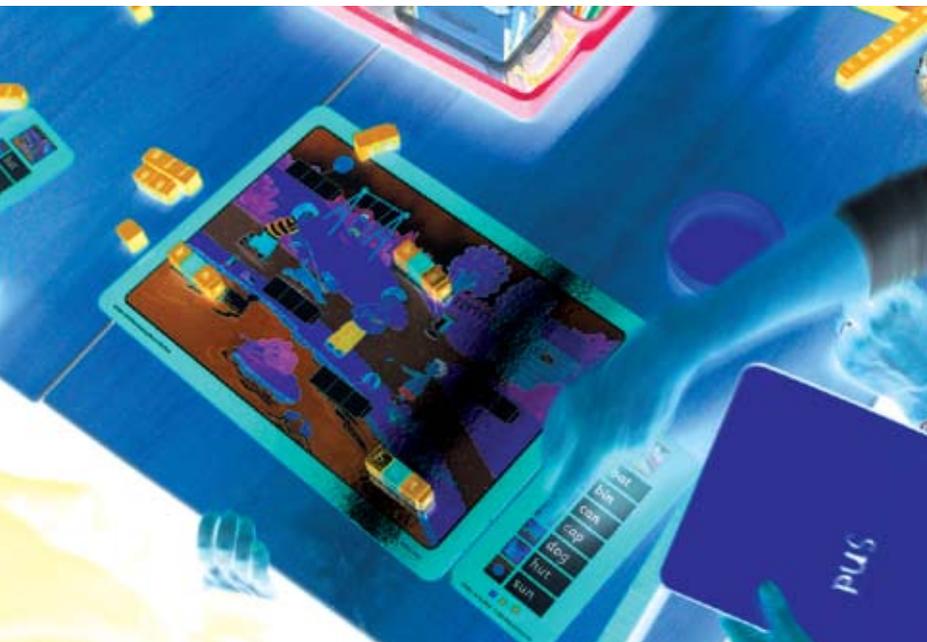
Defining Dyslexia

The British Psychological Society (which is the professional body overseeing the practice of all Chartered Psychologists within the UK) established an expert working group:

Their report sets out the following definition:

“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the ‘word level’ and implies

that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.”



North Ayrshire Council
Education & Skills subscribes
to this definition and the
associated report:

Its approaches to
identification and to
intervention are shaped by it.

In relation to equality
of opportunity, this definition
is non-discriminatory.

Any child who shares the
pattern of difficulties around
developing sound and fluent
literacy skills will be deemed
to be dyslexic.

There are some children who,
despite good teaching, find
it very difficult to develop
the skills necessary for
fluent reading, writing and/
or spelling. Even with extra
help and support from the
teacher, the progress they
make is very slow and often
patchy. The definition also
implies that the teacher is
in the strongest position
to identify when such

problems exist. The teacher
is crucial in providing the
information that allows
early identification.

Dyslexia is complex. Each learner is different and has a unique profile of strengths and weaknesses. Effective classroom assessment and intervention seeks to clarify, the nature of the individual child's difficulties, identify barriers to achievement and implement approaches to reduce the impact of those barriers.

This leaflet cannot provide detailed guidance about individual cases. It does outline, however, what you can expect of your child's school and the education authority. It also suggests what you might do as a parent to help your child.

Dyslexia and Additional Support for Learning:

Every education authority is required to follow guidance outlined in **“Supporting Children’s Learning: Code of Practice”** when considering whether or not a child requires additional support.

The Code of Practice sets out some values and principles that must be taken into account around all aspects of assessment and intervention.



Taking a holistic view of children and young people and their circumstances, and what they need to grow and develop to achieve their potential.

Seeking, taking account of and noting, the views of children, parents and young people.

Ensuring that parents, and young people, understand and are asked to agree to, the aims of any assessment.

Ensuring that assessment is an ongoing, integrated process of planning, providing for, and reviewing, services for the individual.

Adopting an approach which is the least intrusive and most effective course of action.

Taking account of issues of diversity and equality and ensuring that outcomes do not discriminate against children, young people and their families. This includes not discriminating on grounds of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion or belief, and age.

Working in partnership with parents to secure education for their children which promotes their child's health, development and welfare.

The Code of Practice views assessment as "an ongoing process of gathering, structuring and making sense of information about a child or young person and their circumstances.

The purpose of assessment is to help identify the actions required to maximise development and learning." "Assessment is a dynamic process. As a result it should not be divorced from other aspects of the child's life either at school, home or in the community."

**What
does
all this
mean?**



The education authority operates a **Staged Intervention Process**.

This means starting early, starting with small steps, reviewing progress regularly and building up support as this is found to be necessary.

To support this process, the authority has asked teachers to begin to note even their very early concerns about a child's progress or difficulties.

Teachers have also been asked to discuss these early concerns with more experienced colleagues within the school. Following these discussions with colleagues, schools have been asked to talk to you and to your child.

Support and resources will be put in place (probably within the class) and a time set for everyone to review whether these have helped.

If the concerns continue, then further approaches to meet your child's needs will be agreed and another date set for a review of progress.

This is the kind of approach set out in the **Code of Practice**.

It is also important to recognise that where a child's needs are quite severe and perhaps complex, other professionals can be asked for help. The additional support for learning legislation requires multi-agency working where this is necessary to meet a child's educational needs.

What can you do?

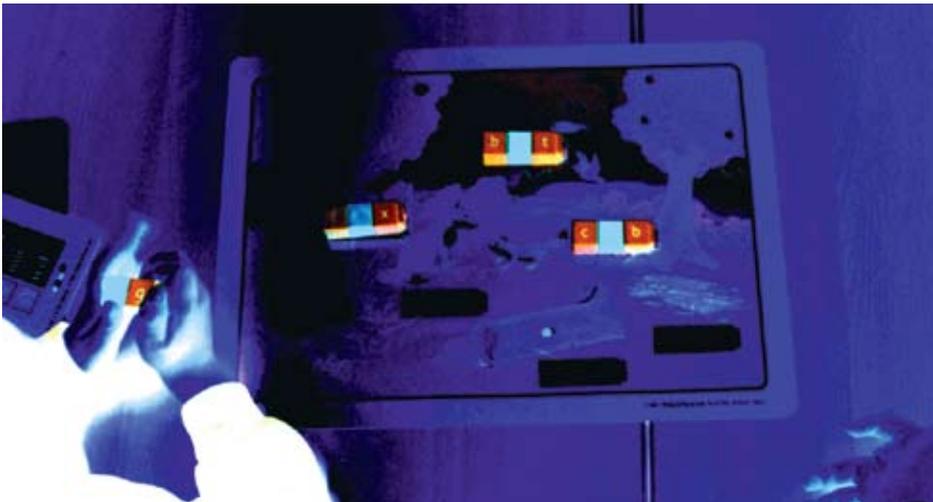


If your child has dyslexia, this can cause stress at home for you and your child.

Your child may feel very discouraged by his/her difficulties and you as a parent play an important part in reassuring them.

Remember that brothers and sisters should be supportive as well, and with encouragement they can play a very positive part.

You may be worried and concerned to know what to do for the best. It is important to talk to staff working with your child about the things you can do to help and support your child at home.



What can you expect the school to do?

Identify when your child is not making expected progress whilst taking care to outline the skills currently possessed in the area of difficulty.

Talk over concerns about your child's progress.

Assess your child's pattern of learning including strengths, difficulties, preferred learning styles and, where appropriate, social and emotional behaviour.

Adapt what is being taught and how it is being taught.

Provide an action plan outlining objectives, outcomes and approaches to implementation.

Review your child's progress regularly

Seek advice (and sometimes, help) from other services within the Authority for example from the school's Educational Psychologist.

Encourage you to have regular informal contact with the school.

Involve you in ways to help your child at home – ways which will complement approaches used in school e.g. paired activities (reading, maths).

Ensure that all staff are aware of your child's action plan and receive help on how to support the plan.

Liaise with secondary school staff when your child is in P7 or before.

Make appropriate arrangements for assessment and examinations.

Schools may carry out the assessment and planning without directly involving the Educational Psychology Service.

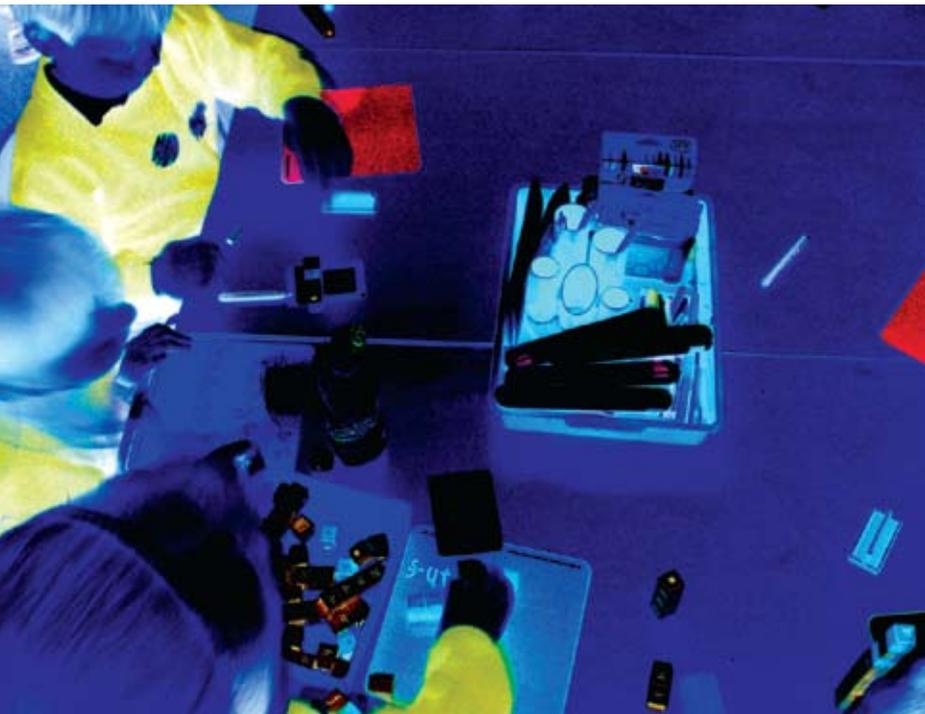
In line with national guidance, assessment should be integrated as far as possible into the normal processes of teaching and learning and should be as unobtrusive as possible.

Where existing teaching strategies and resources have been adapted for your child but their difficulties continue, all North Ayrshire's schools have been provided with a computer-based diagnostic assessment tool. This assessment,

when linked to the wider information available through the normal teaching process, can provide a more focused insight into areas of underlying difficulty and direct new areas for support. The school will notify you of its concerns and of its intention to assess your child using this software. You will be asked to discuss the results and are entitled to request a copy of the completed results.

If your child's difficulties continue to give concern, the school may also decide to involve the educational psychologist and will ask your permission to do this, or you yourself may request that an educational psychologist is involved. You should discuss this with the school.

**When an
educational
psychologist
is involved,
what can you
expect him/her
to do?**



North Ayrshire Council
Educational Psychologists
are all chartered with the
British Psychological
Society. They are highly
trained in children's devel-
opment and effective learn-
ing and teaching.
Their contribution will
depend on the needs
of each case as there
is no single assessment
for dyslexia.
They will:

Discuss your concerns
and worries with you and
the school.

Assist in any additional
assessment of your child's
difficulties. The assessment
will be based on the
classroom context.

Work closely with you and
school staff in identifying
your child's difficulties
and in planning strategies

to reduce barriers
to achievement.

Link with other services
within the authority.

Discuss with you other
ways to help your child
at home such that all are
involved in a consistent and
coherent fashion.

Here are some questions you may wish to discuss with the school and/or educational psychologist.

If I were to do one small thing to help improve my child's reading (etc.) what would it be?

What has the class teacher noticed about my child's work that would be worthy of highlighting to assist in motivating my child?

Should my child be getting homework?

How long should this take?

When is it best to do it?

Would a homework diary be useful?

How can I best support my child with homework?



What success can I focus on and praise?



It is important for you to consider that your child has to work extremely hard at school; this explains any tiredness when he/she arrives home.

It is not advisable to spend too long on academic work in the evenings.

It is also a good idea to encourage a range of different activities that your child can enjoy.

Often they will enjoy the activities for their own sake but it will also give them a chance to experience success, form friendships and increase confidence. The benefits of improved confidence can be enormous in helping children cope better with learning tasks they find difficult.

How about...

Paired approaches to learning?

Taped stories?

Games and activities?

Organising books and equipment?

What Education & Skills has done:



All schools have a learning support system and teachers have access to training on a wide range of additional learning needs including dyslexia.

The Authority provides a range of supports to schools including the Educational Psychological Service, to offer support and guidance to parents, pupils and schools.

Their role is important to the operation of the **Staged Intervention Process**.

Schools are well resourced and have access to a wide range of resources to support children's learning.

Some additional resources which are particularly dyslexia focused include:

Each Primary and Secondary school across North Ayrshire has been provided with computer-

based diagnostic software to help identify areas of difficulty.

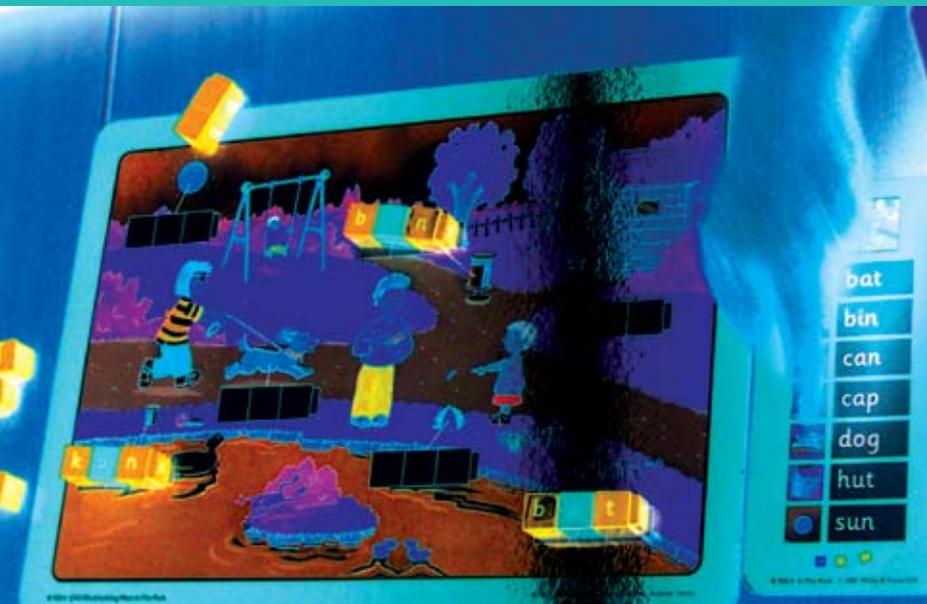
Each Primary school has also been provided with a memory-boosting computer programme. This can help strengthen a child's short-term memory which has been shown to be a problem in many cases of dyslexia.

A range of multi-sensory teaching resources has also been allocated to every school. To support the use of these materials, staff have received training.

The Authority also provides continuing opportunities for teachers and classroom assistants to develop further skills through ongoing training.

Procedural guidance has been sent to each school.

What can other agencies do?



This leaflet may be useful for other agencies (for example health workers or social workers) in outlining how the education service responds to dyslexia.

An agency which is involved with a pupil who may have these difficulties should encourage you, as a parent, to discuss this with the school.

At times this may extend to the agency indicating to the school that in their professional judgement the young person may be dyslexic.

This would not, however, extend to educational assessment as that is an educational responsibility, held by the school and the education authority. You have a right to ask the authority to carry out a specific type of assessment to confirm your child's areas of difficulty. You can ask for this at any time.

Independent Dyslexia Organisations

North Ayrshire is seeking to develop an excellent service which meets parents and their children's needs. Parents may find it reassuring to talk to a person in the same situation, someone who is not part of the council.

Dyslexia Scotland is a voluntary organisation which aims to offer advice and support as well as to increase the understanding of and provision for people who are dyslexic.

Dyslexia Scotland is very pleased to be working with North Ayrshire Council.

The Educational Psychology Service have information leaflets about their work.

Some other useful phone numbers:

Educational Psychology Service

Irvine: 01294 272427

Education & Skills

Each school has a designated **Quality Improvement Officer** who has responsibility for working with the school to improve the standards and quality of educational provision for all learners.

Your child's **School's Officer** can be contacted through the office number given below:

Irvine: 01294 324409

Quality Improvement Officer (Additional Support for Learning):

01294 324451

The Authority has a designated officer to offer guidance to parents and carers on matters that relate to additional support needs: These include specific areas of difficulty such as dyslexia.

Dyslexia Scotland

National Helpline: 0845 800 8484

**Monday - Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm &
2.00pm - 4.00pm**

E: helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk



Dyslexia

Dyslexia



Enquire - the Scottish advice service for Additional Support for Learning



Operated by **Children in Scotland**, **Enquire** offers independent, confidential advice and information on additional support for learning through:

A telephone helpline 0845 123 2303

An email enquiry service info@enquire.org.uk

An online enquiry service

two websites

www.enquire.org.uk

(for parents / carers
& practitioners)

www.enquire.org.uk/yp

(for children & young people)

Enquire also provides a range of clear and easy-to-read guides and factsheets explaining everything from 'additional support in the early years' to 'what planning should take place for moving on from school'.

Education & Skills



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL