

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR HOMEWORK

HELP SHEET 5

Based on information from the British Dyslexia Association website.

Never forget that the purpose of homework is to practise something that your child is already familiar with. If the homework is too difficult, you should discuss this with the child's teacher. 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.

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 eg 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 their homework. Keep in mind that your child may be very tired after school - they have had to work harder than their peers because of their dyslexia. They may need a break before starting homework.

Daily reading is essential, as lots and lots of practice is required for students with dyslexia to develop and master literacy skills. Read aloud with your child when they are becoming frustrated. This helps them to understand and enjoy what they are reading and it still helps them to learn. Your child can also read along with books on tape or CD. Remember that listening to them read shouldn't be a battle so if reading aloud is problem ensure your child is read to instead.

Getting started

Chunk homework tasks into manageable parts. Give breaks between tasks. Encourage your child to produce quality work rather than rushing tasks. The dyslexic student can become discouraged when faced with large amounts of work. Go over homework requirements to ensure your child understands what to do. Read instructions aloud when you know it is hard for them to decode accurately. If necessary, practise the first example or two with them. Help your child to generate ideas for writing tasks and projects before they start work. If necessary, revise vocabulary that they may need. Sometimes you may help to develop a writing plan.

If they are slow to complete work, encourage them to use a timer and see how much work they can complete in 5 minutes. But remember that if homework is regularly taking too long or is too difficult, you should discuss this with their teacher. Give your child lots of praise as they complete homework tasks. Be specific about what they have done well.



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Advice for secondary school students

Help them 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 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 students are not getting 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 students are completing homework tasks and classwork correctly and are handing in work at school. Check that your child is bringing correct books and equipment to school each day.

Encourage them to present work using their personal strengths - for example, they could use pictures if they are good at art. When necessary and appropriate, scribe for your child so that they can get their ideas on paper more accurately.

Checking and monitoring work

Help your child to learn editing, self-monitoring and checking skills so they can go over their own work more independently as they get older. For example, a simple process like COPS can be helpful when proof reading work: C = Capitals. O = overall appearance. P = punctuation. S = spelling. Teach your child to use the computer for work as they get older. Show them how to use a spell checker and encourage them to learn touch typing skills on a Typing Tutor program.

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 Special Education Needs Coordinator or subject teachers about these. Build up independent work skills in your child and problem solving strategies when they are "stuck" or not sure of how to go about homework. Get your child to think about several different ways they could complete the task correctly. They can also think about who they can ask for help when they have tried other strategies. Revise work with your child before examinations. Encourage them to make notes, underline key words, draw pictures, etc. when studying to aid their memory.

For more ideas please read our help sheets on **Assistive Technology (6)**, **Supporting your Child at home (4)** and ..



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