

Red Oaks Primary School
3rd February 2021
Newsletter



Facebook

Please find us and like 'Red Oaks Primary School' on Facebook. By liking us, you will receive any posts we put up.

Christmas Toy Appeal

A huge thank you to all of you who donated to the Swindon Christmas Toy Appeal last year. We were overwhelmed by the amount brought in. In total the appeal achieved the following:



- 5,823 toys were donated - at least triple the number from 2019.
- £10,900 was donated through the giving page with which more presents were bought in specific age categories where less toys were donated.
- 700 children from 265 families received presents.
- Each child was given a complete gift sack and 3 stocking fillers.
- 1 in 2 families also received a food hamper, prepared by Pattern Church and delivered by part of the appeal. This was made possible thanks to donations from Tesco, Swindon Night Shelter and Swindon Food Collective.
- Even after this there are still some toys left over to be able to support schools and local organisations during the lockdown.



Car Park

We remind children regularly that they **MUST** dismount from bikes and scooters at the main car park entrance. The car park is very busy so we ask please do not cut across the disabled bay but use the path that goes around the outside and those that cross the main car park area. We have also reminded the children of this as we do not want any accidents.

Social distancing

As a reminder whilst waiting outside school in the mornings and after school, please keep your children with you so that they cannot run around and mix with others. **Can parents also remain distanced and wear masks at all times?** Thank you.



Thank you

Thank you for all your lovely positive comments about the online learning we are providing; these are being passed onto teachers who really appreciate the kind messages.

Last day of term

A reminder that we break up for half term next Friday 12th February at 3.00pm. **If your child tests positive within 48hrs of last being in school, please inform us as soon as possible. Emails will be regularly monitored during the break. We will then endeavour to contact close contacts in the usual way.**

Children's Mental Health Week

Children's Mental Health Week has been taking place this week, 1-7 February 2021. This year's theme is Express Yourself.

The Royal Patron of the Charity has recorded a video message to mark the week -

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/news/the-duchess-of-cambridge-sends-message-to-mark-children-s-mental-health-week/>



There is a Virtual Assembly - <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/news/watch-our-children-s-mental-health-week-assembly-with-bafta-kids-and-oak-national-academy/> with BAFTA and Oak National Academy is now available to view and share - featuring Jodie Whittaker, Oti Mabuse, Matthew Lewis and many

more... There are lots of free resources to complete at home -

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/parents-and-carers/> And don't forget to add yourself to the [Children's Mental Health Week map](#) to let us know how you are celebrating the week!



'*Looking after our mental health is MAGIC*' details the 5 steps we can all take to improve our mental health and wellbeing, to feel more positive and get the best out of life.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6bz_ekkrYA

WeChat

There has been a lot of coverage in the media about users leaving WhatsApp and using other platforms to send messages. One of the alternatives is WeChat. WeChat is an all-in-one communications app for free text messaging, voice and video calls, photo sharing and games. Additionally, through "mini-programs" (apps integrated into the main WeChat platform), it becomes a one-stop shop by allowing users to do things like send payments, make purchases or book taxis, flights and hotels. Headquartered in Shenzhen, China, WeChat is one of the world's most popular social media downloads, with around 980 million active users. A guide to the app is attached to the newsletter.



Red Oaks Virtual Concert

There is still time to send in your video for the Red Oaks Virtual Concert - videos must be submitted to your class teacher via Dojo. The deadline is February 10th. We can't wait to see the final production! Thank you to Miss Griffiths for organising this once again.

Exercise books

When working at home, can children first fill their homework books. If you need an additional book, please pop to the office, we will be happy to supply you with one.

BIG PEDAL - 4 Weeks of Fun Activities with Outside In

Four weeks of fun and educational resources and activity ideas for families to use at home by Sustrans.

Sustrans work to ensure that the benefits of walking and cycling are enjoyed by everyone. The benefits of walking, cycling, wheeling and healthy places aren't experienced in the same way by everyone, so they want to make it more accessible. Join here for weekly inspiration and resources for kids' activities, games and challenges that they can take part in at home 😊.

Here is a sneak peek of Week 1...



Be a Heart Detective - Today, we'll investigate what activity makes your heart beat the fastest.

What you'll need

- A timer
- A piece of paper
- Sign up, join in and have fun!



https://www.sustrans.org.uk/campaigns/outside-in/?utm_source=Sustrans&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12121135_Copy%20of%20Jan%20relaunch%20Outside%20In_for%20schools&utm_content=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sustrans.org.uk%2Fcampaigns%2Foutside-in%2F&dm_i=6EB,77SQ7,MMTC75,T8T32,1



THE SWINDON TRAILBLAZER'S

ONLINE YOUTH CLUB

Want something different to do? Interested in connecting with young people from different schools?

We provide a free resource pack to everyone signed up, ensuring you can join in with all activities.

Icebreakers, memory games, art and crafts, challenges, quizzes and more!

Age groups: 5-7, 7-11 and 11-16

Follow this link to sign up for our online sessions:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/swindon-trailblazers-outreach-team-32372666431>

For more information contact Saxone or Tamara on outreach.swindontrailblazer@barnardos.org.uk or call 07395712261/07783847583



What Parents & Carers Need to Know About WECHAT

17+
App Store Rating

WeChat is an all-in-one communications app for free text messaging, voice and video calls, photo sharing and games. Additionally, through “mini-programs” (apps integrated into the main WeChat platform), it becomes a one-stop shop by allowing users to do things like send payments, make purchases or book taxis, flights and hotels. Headquartered in Shenzhen, China, WeChat is one of the world’s most popular social media downloads, with around 980 million active users.

Risky Connections

Users of WeChat can exchange contact info instantly through their own unique QR code. That also means that one quick scan of your child’s QR code would give a person all of their details. Users can also add a person to their WeChat network using just a phone number – and, more worryingly, there’s an option to search *specifically* for nearby users, utilising their device’s location services.

Age-Inappropriate Activity

Social services in Malaysia (where WeChat is among the top three messaging platforms) have highlighted the app as a conduit for teenagers and schoolchildren to gamble online, arrange sexual hook-ups and deal drugs. WeChat’s age rating is 17+, but this is only an electronic verification: a child could simply lie about their age to download the app and would not have to provide proof.

Random Contacts

WeChat has a ‘discover users’ mode which allows you to connect with other people – either worldwide or nearby – entirely at random, through the device’s GPS locator. The ‘shake’ facility (i.e. literally shaking the phone) puts you in touch with another user (most likely a stranger) and instantly allows messaging and video contact. For children and young adults, this feature is potentially incredibly dangerous.

Surveillance Suspicions

Some western journalists have alleged that WeChat is being used on behalf of the Chinese government to mine data, access voicemails and track users’ physical location. The Indian Government banned the app in 2020 over “data and privacy issues”. In the USA, the Government has initiated legal proceedings to block WeChat, citing national security and data privacy concerns.

Questionable Impartiality

There have been numerous media reports of WeChat blocking or censoring messages because of ‘restricted’ keywords, usually related to politically sensitive subjects (for example, criticism of the Chinese Government’s response to the Covid-19 outbreak). Some people’s accounts have allegedly been disabled because of something comparatively innocuous that they posted. If this is accurate, it raises questions about the reliability and fairness of WeChat’s content.



Advice for Parents & Carers

Research It Yourself

If your child is interested in using WeChat, it’s a good idea to download it yourself before they do, to help you decide if it is appropriate for them to use. Getting the app yourself will allow you to experience how easy it is to obtain, how users can create and share their own content, quickly make connections with other people, discover users’ locations and so on.

Disable Location Services

If you are intending to let your child use WeChat, we would strongly suggest that you do not let the app access their device’s location services. That will not only prevent random – and quite probably, unwanted – contact requests from strangers, but it will also stop other users nearby being able to pinpoint your child’s whereabouts.

Adjust Security Settings

Unless a user alters it, the default security setting is that anyone else on WeChat (anywhere in the world) is able to see what they’ve posted – including photos and videos. What’s more, when a user adds text, images or video to their ‘Moments’ (a scrolling feed of friends’ updates), not only their contacts but anyone nearby can see what they’ve uploaded.

Remember Linked Accounts

Bear in mind that users can connect WeChat to their Facebook and Twitter. That makes it easy to share content from the app – including posts that were intended to be private. If your child does link social media accounts, encourage them to think carefully before posting. Similarly, WeChat offers in-app purchases of stickers and games, so you may want to discuss in-app spending with your child in advance.

Meet Our Expert

Jonathan Taylor is an authority on online safety, social media and online grooming, having previously been a covert internet investigator with the Metropolitan Police for more 10 years. He has worked extensively with UK and international schools to deliver training and guidance around the latest apps, platforms and dangers.



<https://nationalpost.com/news/censored-by-a-chinese-tech-giant-canadians-using-wechat-app-say-theyre-being-restricted>,
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3064832/how-wechat-censored-even-neutral-messages-about-coronavirus>,
<https://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/wechat-app-used-pupils-sex-drugs-and-gambling>,
<https://qz.com/518908/wechats-new-heat-map-feature-lets-users-and-chinese-authorities-see-where-crowds-are-forming/>



**RESOURCES TO ASSIST
WITH HOME LEARNING AND WORKING**

January 2021

On behalf of the WDA, I prepare monthly newsletters which during 2020 included information to assist dyslexics with home learning and working from home. I thought I would now put these resources together in this special newsletter edition along with new additional information. I hope it proves helpful. Please feel free to share.

News items and offers are continually being made available and will be included in future monthly newsletters. Meanwhile I will endeavour to share the details on our Facebook page: [Dyslexia Support Group - Chippenham](#)

Wishing everyone well for 2021.

Caroline Fowke

WDA Secretary and Helpline
caroline.fowke@btinternet.com
Home: 01249 655489
WDA information in [flyer](#).



[View Website](#)

Support over full remote teaching

Our founder Arran Smith works with Microsoft as the UK's Dyslexia and SEND Consultant, supporting schools, colleges, and universities in all areas of accessibility, disability and SEND, in relation to using Microsoft 365.

If you need any support or want to ask anything to Arran regarding remote learning, or just need that support why not book a FREE 30-minute call with Arran, to discuss how you can support more students throughout remote learning using Microsoft 365.

[Book Here](#)

Juggling home and work life with kids!



[Prof Amanda Kirby](#)

8 January 2021

CEO of Do-IT Solutions., Campaigner for Neurodiversity, Medic, Knowledge Translator, researcher, D and I judge, LinkedInTopVoice for 2020

A former lecturer and expert in the field of neurodiversity, her own experience with her neurodiverse family has given her a unique understanding, insight and passion to raise awareness and champion best practice when supporting dyslexic learners.

This is an extraordinary time for everyone and there are very few people who are not feeling anxious at some time. For parents with children of all ages and especially those who have children with additional learning challenges, it has also meant having to balance their children's needs and wellbeing alongside their own when we thought it was all going to get better!



In addition, juggling home working with trying to support children's learning means there is a fine line between coping and not coping at all and feeling overwhelmed.

Anxiety can come along in waves when you are least expecting it, and at these times it can feel like we have lost control. Every child will also be trying to cope with a changing reality with no timelines or certainty on the horizon. They may be trying to make sense of what is happening in their own way depending on their age. Some will be able to verbalize this, while some may become angry, irritable, or withdrawn. They will certainly be picking up on your concerns and the way you act and behave with them.

This article explains some reasons for our feelings and also provides some practical tips and strategies and activities that you and your family can use to help.

Why do we feel anxious?

This may be for example:

- Changes in the person's routines
- Lack of control over choices
- Fear about our wellbeing of others
- Uncertainty about the future (and the present!)

At the moment, we have all of these things going on and hence this makes us all feel more anxious because we can't be in control.

So what can we do?

One way of thinking about this is seeing ourselves as a 'bucket'. Each one of us has so much capacity. Varying elements in our lives fill up our buckets and they can fill at different rates.

If our bucket becomes too full and overflows, we then feel overwhelmed. In normal circumstances, we would find ways of coping by reducing the level in the bucket. This could be achieved, for example, by taking exercise, meeting friends, or talking to others.

At the present time, there is a lot flowing in but less choice of how we empty the bucket! By understanding your own anxieties, you can help your children as well as yourself.



What helps if you feel anxious?

F = Focus on what's in your control

- You can't control everything, but you can control what is going on in your home and with your children.

A = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings.

- Allow yourself to recognise when you feel anxious.

C = Come back into your body

- Stand up or press feet to the floor; or place your hands on a chair.
- Shrug your shoulders.
- Take some slow and deep breaths.

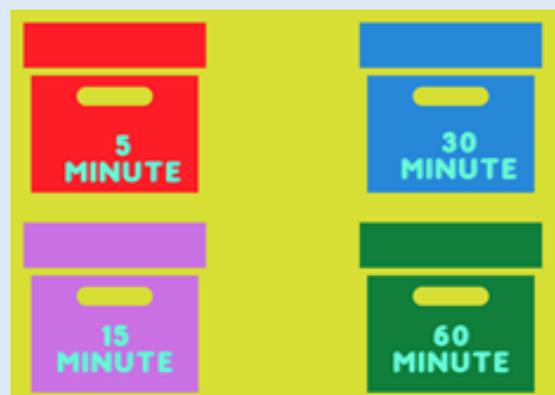
E = Engage in what you're doing

Start by being kind to yourself.

For most of us, we are trying to work and be at home all at the same time in really strange circumstances.

Start by mapping out the day. Be realistic in what you can achieve and start by being kind to yourself. You may need to plan your work and your children's time.

Unless you are a teacher – you are not a teacher! This may be more challenging if your child has additional learning needs and finds it harder to focus on some tasks. If you think about it how much time your child actually spends with their teacher each day?



Your day-to-day contact provides so many opportunities for learning that don't have to be scheduled by the minute. An average school day is 360 minutes and with about 30 children in each class, that means that 12 minutes per child is the total of time given if it was one-to-one. By being more relaxed with your children, and your children sensing this, they will also be less anxious too.

While it is important to structure the day, try not to over-organize it minute by minute. If you don't achieve everything you will just feel you have failed. Let your children put the plan together. Build-in achievable rewards. These can be a mix of small ones (more easily achievable) and bigger ones that can be gained.

Tops tips:

Create a broad structure to the day such as ensuring there are regular mealtimes. An expected time to get up and get dressed for example.

Let your children help with chores every day (this also provides structure) and provide them with a menu of activities, so they can decide how many rewards they get when they engage in this.

Avoid talking about Covid-19 and watching the news and checking on your phone in front of your children all the time. Don't start catastrophizing as this can easily spiral your feelings out of control. Focus on what you can control.

Create times and ways to discuss worries with your children. Sometimes it can be easier talking about worries when you are not directly doing so

Play a game of cards, do some colouring or painting, do a jigsaw together, or prepare a meal. It can be easier for your children to talk at these times when they can see you are more relaxed as well. You can have a more 'normal' conversation.

Have a worry box where worries can be posted. They can be taken away each day (and you can see what is concerning your child).

Build an 'anger volcano' - You could build this with Lego blocks, papier-mâché or Playdoh or draw a volcano (good for planning, turn-taking, creativity, and fine motor skills). You could also find out everything about volcanoes- how they look, where are the biggest ones around the world (geography, history).

Discuss with your child how a volcano rumbles and then erupts and how this can relate to feelings we have when we get angry or feel out of control. Talk to your child about how they feel when they want to 'erupt' and what can be done to stop that from happening.

Set time each day to do fun stuff together.

Write a family song or use kitchen instruments to create music together.

Make a family history- your child could interview your family members on the phone or on the internet.

Cook together and do activities in the kitchen – your children can learn about food from other countries; maths concepts (fractions, weights, calculating amounts); fine motor tasks such as cutting up and even undertaking **Science experiments**

Watch live webcam from the zoos around the world or virtual museum tours.

Learn a new skill together – playing cards, learning another language, painting or drawing.

Read or listen to a book together- a few pages every day
e.g. <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Create a regular time for exercise – it will help with sleep and mood too
e.g. do some yoga together or do a daily activity class like **Joe Wicks** daily class.

Read more from Professor Amanda Kirby here: [109 articles](#)
See also: [Neurodiversity free resources and links to useful information \(doitprofiler.com\)](#)

Support available on the BDA website:



[How can I support my child?](#)

[Spelling](#)

[Handwriting](#)

[Homework](#)

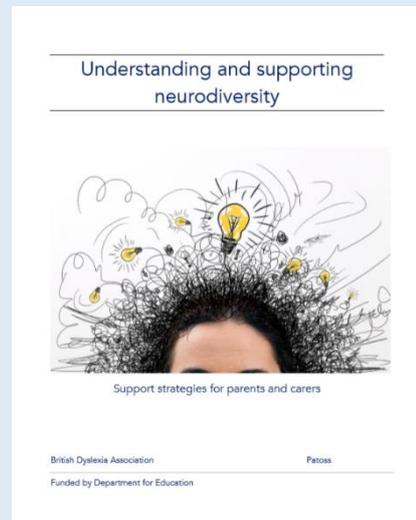
[Reading](#)

[Soundcheck booklet](#) This was produced for the Department for Education funded BDA project 'Sound Check'. The aim of the booklet is to help parents and carers support their child with reading, spelling and handwriting.



[Empowered Parents](#)

A guide on how to work collaboratively with schools as well as practical advice on supporting a child with dyslexia at home.



[Understanding and supporting neurodiversity: Support strategies for parents and carers](#)

The strategies presented in this booklet provide a starting point for helping to support children and young people with a range of learning differences.

FREE WEBINAR RECORDINGS



During 2020 the BDA provided a number of free webinars and the recordings are available at:

[Webinars - Free and Paid - Shop - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](#)

... or by clicking on the following links:



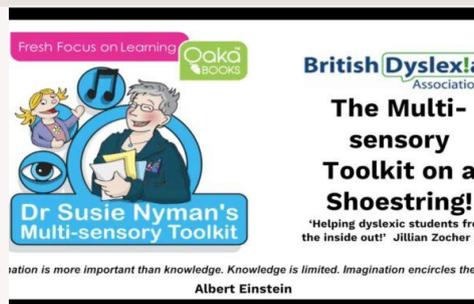
[Move Beyond Words with AJ and Curtis: Free webinar for young people](#)



[Assistive Technology and the Dyslexic Learner](#)



[Study skills at home for older students with dyslexia](#)



[Multi-sensory Toolkit Ideas on a Shoestring](#)



Managing you and your child's wellbeing– being realistic and human (and not super-human!)

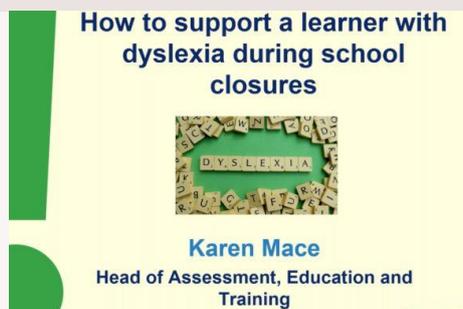
Why?

Why do so many dyslexic children have problems at school, yet go on to do really well in life?

How to prepare your child for success in life



Q&A ambassador panel webinar – Succeeding with dyslexia for parents and children



Webinar for parents - How to support your dyslexic child during school closures

Dyslexia and Virtual Teaching and Learning



Delivery of Teaching

- Ensure learning materials meet the BDA's Style Guide. Whenever possible record the session too: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/news/bda-updates-the-dyslexia-friendly-style-guide>
- Reasonable adjustments and the usual study support must be in place while students are working from home. The first step is to ask the learner what additional support they think will help.
- Wherever possible send slides and notes ahead of sessions, this gives learners a chance to prepare for learning!
- Structure sessions with learning aims at the beginning, setting the scene for the virtual session, and then summarise at the end, this puts learning into context.
- Please try to use as many different information sources and learning strategies as possible: videos, links to texts, quizzes, mini presentations, think creatively and make learning as engaging as you can!
- Ensure Virtual Teaching is as multisensory as possible, with at least something to look at, for example slides and a chance to listen to key information, with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss.
- During a virtual session, do not overload the chat box with information, if there is a lively discussion in the chat box, the trainer should endeavour to read out relevant comments and link those ideas to the session also.
- If a student's usual specialist software is temporarily unavailable, they may find a free temporary download for their software via the software company's website. This link has a free temporary download of Read and Write Gold so students can try it out: www.texthelp.com/en-gb/products/read-write/read-write-for-work/ This YouTube video has a good demonstration: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxUwQMm_Lmw
- Microsoft has dictation and screen-reading features built-in (as do smartphones) assigning a trusted tutor/mentor for support with activating and using these tools is a quick way of providing help to employees with dyslexia.
- This video demonstrates ways of adjusting the built-in screen tinting features without the need for specialist software: www.youtube.com/watch?v=hINILnaBWOg&t=2s
- Whilst studying remotely, has the Tutor ensured that there are clear channels of communication if a student is struggling to cope and remain focused?
- Why not consider delivering some mini-bitesize sessions on Study-skills? Encourage virtual study groups too, these can be informal get togethers to back up learning.

- Screen-share enables the teacher's documents to be viewed by learners. The built-in whiteboard enables the teacher to write 'live' for the learners (good for spelling activities).
- Google Docs / Google Jam Board / Bit Paper enables the teacher and learner to type together or edit a document simultaneously.
- ActiveInspire enables learners to type directly into the teacher's 'PowerPoint-style' materials.
- A 'document camera' enables the teacher to share whatever they have in front of them for example, wooden letters, play dough, or drawing / writing on a document. TurboScanner is useful for photographing documents to share with groups.
- Quizlet is useful for Flashcard work such as for vocabulary work, spelling strategies and maths.

Staying Organised for a Virtual Learning

- Electronic calendars with reminders can have deadlines logged in (wall planners and paper timetables can also be used for visual methods of seeing the 'timeline').
- Where possible, have a designated study-zone at home, keep text books and learning resources stored in one area, so you have all you need to learning in one place.
- Ensure that breaks are taken away from the study-zone; this will help to maintain perspective, to reduce stress and to ensure there is a chance to decompress.
- Need help and advice? Reach out to us here at the British Dyslexia Association: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

To help support dyslexic adults working from home,
the BDA has produced this guide:

['Dyslexia and Working from Home'](#)

There is also a: ['Guide to Studying from Home'](#)
and the [Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide 2018](#)



Need to print off different types of paper
like graph paper?

Check out this website for free resources:
<https://www.printablepaper.net/>



The following notes were part of the presentation material provided by the BDA at our WDA/BDA Roadshow event last March. The notes might be particularly helpful for parents at this time when so many children are studying at home.

Supporting Literacy:

Reading:

This is about picking up ideas from the printed page, not just decoding words! (Important concept).

- Look at anything with lovely pictures and discuss ideas it stimulates e.g. coffee table books, National Geographic or travel brochures or things that are of interest such as hobby-based magazines.
- Read school readers for no more than 10 minutes per day – stress rule “little and often”.
- Read humorous books together e.g. cartoons are useful with older children.
- Continue to read to your child for as long as they will let you, but don't stress if they don't like it. Some memory issues can make it difficult to follow the thread of a story so use non-fiction instead which has a purpose.
- Read their set books so you can talk to them about them. Encourage the use of audio books so they can get the feel for literature and develop vocabulary.
- Using recipe books and then cooking the recipe is a great activity.
- Ask the teacher for reading material that will be used the next day and let the child read it at home in a relaxed way.
- Use paired reading.
- Explore the use of reading rulers from Cross Education.

Spelling:

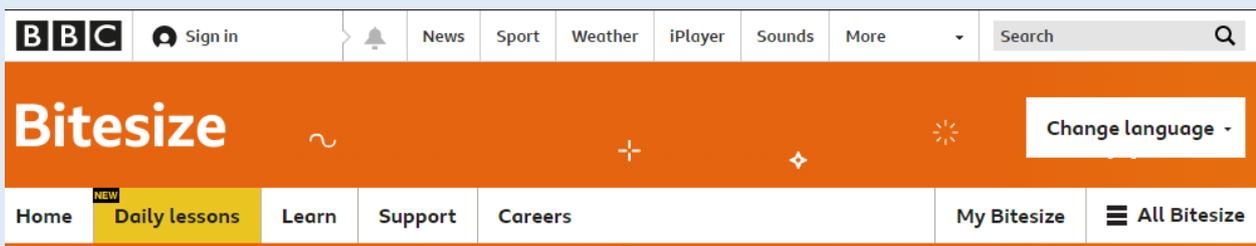
Things parents can do include:

- Playing I Spy, Scrabble, pairs (using word pairs you can create on bits of card), word hunt books, road sign games, etc.

- Use a multi-sensory approach to help child learn homework spellings, make up rhythms or rhymes.
- Use word association and colour and put words to be learned in places where the child will naturally see them.

Writing:

- Keep writing practice short and sweet - e.g. find fun things to do like writing shopping lists, menus, make birthday cards, etc.
- Teach child to write with continuous cursive (joined up) writing on lined paper and a standard HB pencil.
- If you can afford it, get a computer and encourage your child to use it. If you can, as they get older arrange for them to learn to touch type – software available.
- Wordshark and Numbershark are particularly useful for working with children at home on the computer.
- Gamz produce card games which reinforce spelling and reading
- Various apps are available for games such as 100 Pics.



Five ways to support your child with dyslexia at home

by Karen Mace - Head of Assessment, Education and Training, British Dyslexia Association

As a parent or carer of a young person with dyslexia, you are wearing many hats. In addition to all the work you were doing to support them emotionally and academically, you are now playing the role of teacher and dyslexia specialist.

In 2019, a survey for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dyslexia and other SpLDs found that 95 percent of parents and carers felt they lacked the skills and knowledge to support their dyslexic child. So, if you're struggling with your new roles, the most important thing to remember is, don't worry, you're not alone and it's perfectly normal to find supporting a dyslexic child's learning difficult.

There are some simple ways you can make home schooling more effective and enjoyable for you and your dyslexic child. Here are our top five.

1. Get a routine

For most people, routine is important but for learners with dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions, it is even more critical.

A good starting point is the creation of a visual timetable for each day, which will create structure and enable your child to have a clear vision of the day ahead. This ideally would include the use of relevant pictures and colour and these would be used consistently so the child identifies with them.

Once a timetable has been prepared, it's time to think about where the learning will physically take place. For some learning, you may need a table, but an outdoor space or floor space may also be useful for certain situations – the location of these should be outlined in the timetable.

2. Decide what to teach

The next step is to spend some time getting to know what learning level your child is at. The work should challenge them but not be inaccessible to them.

Bear in mind that every child is different and even more so for a learner with dyslexia who is likely to be at different stages in different topics. Also, remember their ability may be reflected in spoken rather than written work.

When deciding on what to learn, your child's interests and strengths should be a large factor. Yes, there are things your child will have to learn, regardless of whether they enjoy it or struggle with it, but don't fixate on these. Give opportunities to learn about topics that your child enjoys and can do well, as this will help them stay motivated. Also include non-curricular activities and life skills such as cooking, sewing and gardening.

3. Teach using a 'multisensory' approach

Multisensory simply means using more than one of a child's senses at a time. Because of the way the dyslexic brain works, learning this way is far more effective.

For example, if your child just reads a book they are using one sense, sight. But if they read along with an audiobook, they are using two senses, sight and hearing. This would be multisensory learning and would mean your dyslexic child absorbs and retains the information in the book far better.

An activity should include at least two senses –seeing something (visual), hearing something related to what is seen (auditory), some form of related movement of muscles, for example speaking or writing (kinaesthetic), and touching or feeling something (tactile).

Here is an example of how you might apply multisensory learning if your child needed to do some alphabet work:

- Lay out an alphabet arc by putting the letters of the alphabet into an arc shape.
- Sing the alphabet song while touching each of the letters in turn.
- Discover the letter being introduced by taking items out of a bag that begin with the same letter.
- The learner feels the objects, names them and pulls them out to check if they are right.
- Identify the target sound and letter name.
- Demonstrate how to form the letters on a whiteboard.
- The learner explores forming the letter in sand, shaving foam, wikki sticks or similar.

Multisensory learning is useful for children of any age. For an older child, multisensory teaching can be as simple as, instead of getting them to read a book about Ancient Egypt, do a virtual tour of the British Museum and discuss the topic with them as you take a virtual walk through their Ancient Egypt galleries. At the moment, lots of galleries and museums are offering free virtual tours on their websites. There is lots of information out there on multisensory teaching.

4. Embrace technology

Nowadays, there are so many free features embedded in our computers, tablets and smartphones that can make a huge difference to young people with dyslexia.

In particular the ones to look out for are text to speech features, which read out written words on the device; speech to text, which allows your child to dictate their work to a device; and advance spelling and grammar checkers. All the big technology companies have these features now and you will find lots of information out there about how to use them to support dyslexic learning.

Learning to touch type is one of the big skills that we find helps young people with dyslexia in education and on into the workplace. Lockdown is the perfect time for your child to start one of the great touch-typing programmes out there. There are many free options available including the [BBC's Dance Mat Typing](#). Young people with dyslexia, whilst they might not necessarily enjoy reading books, often take to listening to audiobooks and find a love of literature that way. With many audiobook companies offering free children's books during the school closures, now is a good opportunity to try audiobooks with your child. This would be a fabulous activity to do as a break from other learning or at the end of the day.

5. Don't overload your child

If you have been having to do a full school day at home, you will have realised that it is not a good idea. Learning one on one or small groups is much more intense than a normal school day. This is exacerbated for a dyslexic learner, because of way the dyslexic brain works, they tire faster.

It's much better to get a smaller amount of quality teaching time in each day, than fight to hit a six-or-seven-hour day because you feel you should match the school day.

Don't ignore that the COVID-19 lockdown is a psychological challenge for all of us. Learning at this time will inevitably be different and it is likely that at times you will need to prioritise mental health over keeping up with schoolwork. That is absolutely the right thing to do.

Karen Mace is Head of Assessment, Education and Training at the British Dyslexia Association. She has 25 years teaching experience in primary schools – both in the UK and abroad – including four years as a deputy headteacher and seven years as a SENCO.

If you're looking for more on dyslexia and how to support your child, the British Dyslexia Association website is full of practical information and includes the latest information on the support available for parents during the school closures.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z6mts4j>

See also: [More from our SEND collection](#) [Parents' Toolkit](#)



The June edition of the BDA Contact Magazine included the following articles:

“Multi-sensory teaching at home” - pages 15-19

“Managing you and your children's anxiety” - pages 36-38

You can [read the full edition of contact](#) or access the [mobile-friendly version](#).





**THE
STUDYING
WITH
DYSLEXIA
BLOG**

Lockdown 3.0 Remote learning again!

John Hicks



It is not a surprise that Boris Johnson announced a national lockdown to contain the spread of the new variant of the Corona Virus. This means millions of children and young people are having to do remote learning with exams cancelled for later in the year. For some this will be extremely difficult and with dyslexia in the mix, may find that remote learning will be unengaging and socially isolating for the next month or so.

So I want to share as much information and inspiration that you can use as you support your dyslexic learner. I am inviting any specialist teachers, dyslexia tutors, assessors or any other professionals who have specialisms with dyslexia to get in touch with me and write a guest article that shares tips that can be used by parents, teachers and other supporters of dyslexic learners, that will make a difference to our dyslexic remote learners.

- If you are a parent who has a strategy for engaging your child with remote learning then I want to hear from you!
- If you are a SENCO / specialist / assessor who has some tips for parents then I want to hear from you.

Don't worry if you don't feel confident about writing an article. Just email me the details of what you want to communicate, and I will get the article written: john@studyingwithdyslexiablog.co.uk

Here are the latest articles written this week:

[How to support the emotional development of our dyslexic learners.](#)

[How to help your dyslexic child improve remote learning during "UK Lockdown".](#)

[Understanding the interaction between DCD \(Dyspraxia\) and Dyslexia: Should schools teach PE differently?](#)

See also:

[Reviewing Resources: Current Understanding, Support Systems, and Technology-led Interventions for Specific Learning Difficulties.](#)

[A simple strategy for dyslexic students to use to increase attainment.](#)

[How to inspire a love of reading despite dyslexia.](#)

[Three tips for dyslexic learners for effective learning from home.](#)

John Hicks: john@studyingwithdyslexiablog.co.uk

John Hicks is a parenting coach who works with families to build confidence and self-esteem as well as help parents find the resources they need to support their children through education. 'Parenting Dyslexia' - support for families experiencing dyslexia whether it is a child or parent:

Facebook: [Parenting Dyslexia With John Hicks](#)

LinkedIn: [John Hicks - Parenting and Studying With Dyslexia consultant ...](#)



[Darren Clark](#) shared this post on LinkedIn

Dyslexia Influencer / Award Winning Entrepreneur / Changing perceptions for Dyslexia globally through speaking, and training/ Making Organisations and schools fully SpLD Inclusive and trailblazing awareness.

Offer for student support! 🧑🎓

View video message at: <https://youtu.be/ZFFsMwalTXU>

Parents/Teachers you are all doing such an incredible job during yet more uncertain times and home/online schooling. So I would like to do my bit and offer my assistance where you may need it for FREE!

I have spoken to over 80,000 students in order to help inspire, support and motivate them through difficult transitions and periods and I would love to support you all during this time. So, whether it's as part of your online learning or some one-to-one support, for all students or students with SpLDs then contact me and we can discuss how best I can help.

Good luck everyone, you're all amazing! 🙏

Please comment, PM me or contact darren@globaldyslexiagroup.com #education #backtoschool #dyslexiaawareness #schools

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- ~ Builds correct pronunciation of words and decoding skills by proper modeling.
- ~ Transcends the listener to different places, times, worlds, & experiences.
- ~ Reduces cognitive overload.
- ~ Many retain more of what they hear than what they read.
- ~ Builds vocabulary and knowledge.
- ~ Boosts self-confidence and independence.
- ~ Allows for intellectual engagement with the content of the book.
- ~ Promotes a life-long love of books.
- ~ Improves overall school performance.
- ~ Increases social & emotional skills by learning vicariously via the characters.

www.ForestAllianceCoaching.com www.facebook.com/ForestAllianceCoaching

SSENS Team Support and Information Resource Pack and Newsletters

Knowing that this is a very challenging time for parents generally but perhaps even more so for parents of children with additional needs, the Specialist Special Educational Needs Service (SSENS) Team have put together a resource pack which can be accessed by this link - [Learning Resources and Activities](#) – which includes the links below:

- [Choosing a Reading Book](#)
- [Helping Concentration Top Tips](#)
- [Home Learning Info from SSENS](#)
- [Paired Reading Page 112 and 113](#)
- [Spelling Support Strategies from Drivers Youth Trust \(DYT\)](#)
- [Web suggestions for schools and parents](#)
- [Working with an AS child during the CV crisis](#)
- [Reading for Pleasure](#)
- [SSENS Newsletter July 2020 - Visuals and multi-sensory special](#)
- [Emotions fan](#)
- [Widgit daily routine](#)
- [SSENS Newsletter June 2020 – Maths Special](#)
- [Telling the time – using analogue clocks](#)
- [Let's Practise Telling the Time \(Key Stage 1\)](#)
- [Let's Practise Telling the Time \(Key Stage 2\)](#)
- [SSENS Newsletter May 2020](#)
- [SSENS Newsletter April 2020](#)
- [Top Tip: Paired Reading](#)

Also . . . [Click here](#) to view “Supporting Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties in Wiltshire”.

Barrington Stoke Homeschooling Help for Lockdown

Advice, information and free resources for parents
and carers of children with dyslexia

Click to jump to each section

- Introduction 2
- Expert tips for homeschooling in lockdown 3
- Our top tips for reading 4
- Did you know ... 4
- How Barrington Stoke can help 5
 - Choosing the right books 5
 - Dyslexia-Friendly Classics 5
 - Using our website 6
 - Young Editors 6
 - Our free resources 7
 - Fun activities 8
- Specialist support during lockdown 9
- Other websites and initiatives we love 12

Helping you to be a reader
Barrington Stoke

Home Learning Dyslexic Resources

Barrington Stoke has published a free digital pack of advice, information and resources to support dyslexic children learning from home.

It contains a variety of tips on reading and home schooling during lockdown, access to activities and resources for all ages.

There are also links to a range of organisations that can offer further support.

[Dyslexic Resources](#)



Temporary Scheme to Increase Data Allowances on Mobile Devices to Support Disadvantaged Children

This scheme temporarily increases data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted.

You may be able to get help if you do not have fixed broadband at home, cannot afford additional data for your child's device or if your child is experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education.

Please take a look at the following link for full details and liaise with your school if you think you may qualify for the scheme: [Data Allowances on Mobile Devices](#)

Please note that any requests for an increase in mobile data has to come from either schools or the Local Authority, not directly from parents.

Wiltshire Council to Buy Laptops and Digital Devices for Disadvantaged Pupils

Wiltshire Council is allocating £1.1m of government COVID-19 funding to buy laptops and digital devices for disadvantaged pupils who currently can't join classmates learning from home.

Currently pupils who do not have a laptop can attend school alongside children of key workers and vulnerable students. The decision to allocate the funding to buy around 2,500 devices means these children will be able to access their school lessons from home rather than have to attend school to do so.

The [Wiltshire Parent Carer Council](#) will post further information when it is available.

Lockdown - Do You Have Any Tips or Strategies to Share?

As we continue to manage the best we can during lockdown, we are likely to find certain things that help us and our children to get through each day. If you have any simple tips that you find work for you, we would love to hear them and we will add them to a new section we are setting up on our website within the Coronavirus section. We hope with your help, tips and strategies that have been tried by other parent carers might be a really useful resource for others when they are beginning to struggle.

Tips and strategies that parent carers have shared with each other already include: -

Keep a Routine: "We keep to the same routine every day. It has really helped my son's anxiety."

Teach Life Skills: "We are using the time to teach life skills – this was a lot more difficult before the lockdown."

Don't Stress about Home Learning: "Try to make home schooling fun, so that it's a positive experience with good memories you can share with your kids in the future."

Slow Down: "The lockdown is allowing us time together as a family that normal life didn't – and the slower pace is nice!"

It's Okay not to be Okay: "Go on online support groups and share your feelings. It's ok not to be ok."

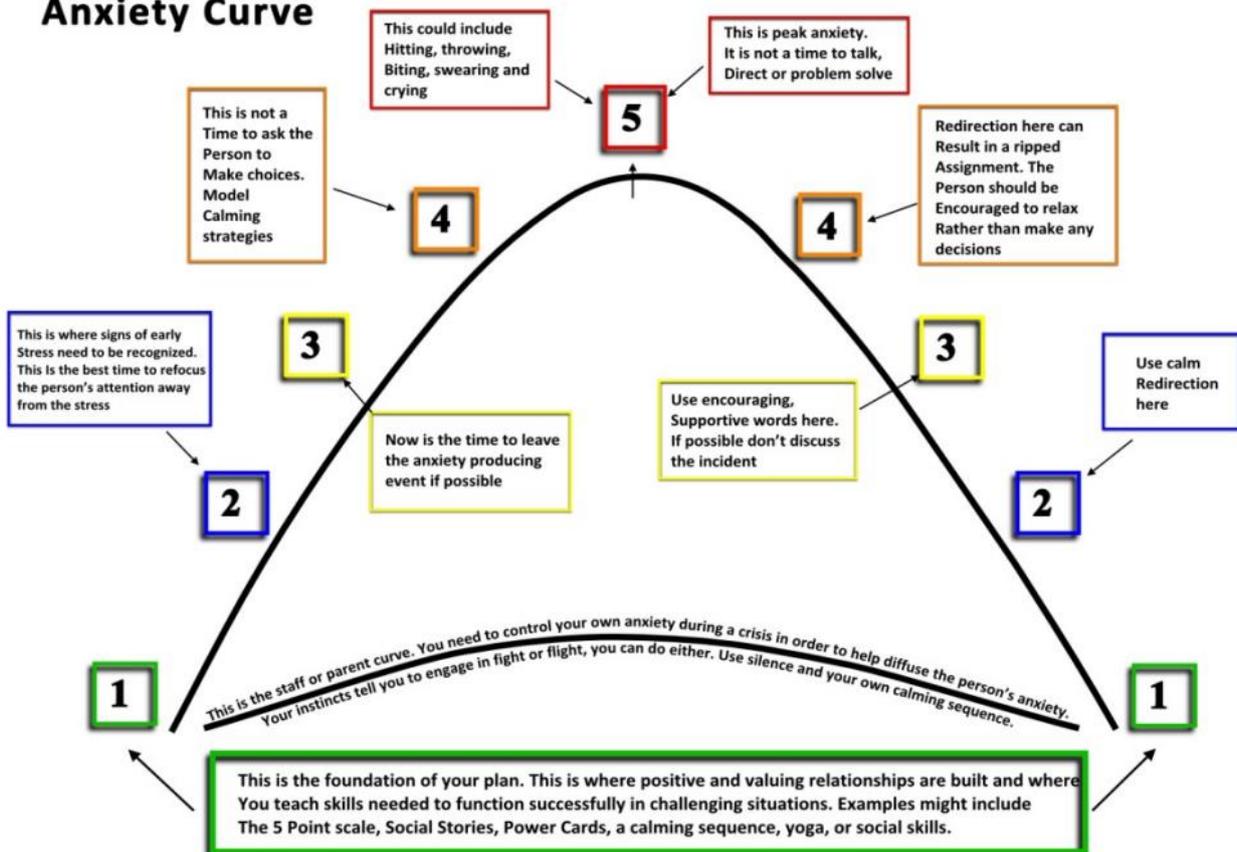
One Day at a Time: "Just take each day as it comes, if today is a disaster, try again tomorrow."

Can you add to these tips? Send your tips and strategies to: admin@wiltspcc.co.uk

Anxiety

- Anxiety is NORMAL – for children and adults.
- It is a feeling of unease, worry or fear.
- It is healthy/appropriate and keeps us safe.
- It is activated in our brains when we sense a threat – flight, fight, freeze response kicks in.
- Less helpful anxiety starts to interfere and impact on our daily routines – this is then a problem.
- We need to be aware of our own anxiety as parents as it feeds into our children's anxiety – we see the situation as negative and have negative, anxious thoughts of our own. We dread the same situations too!! e.g. bedtimes, mealtimes.
- We need to use a different parenting approach when a child is really anxious – a child needs to feel safe and they need space. Nothing else matters.
- Thinking part of the brain is not working when we are anxious.
- Helping children recognise their anxiety, how it feels, helping them to express that and give it a name can really help them start to understand and gain strategies/tools they can use to help.
- The Anxiety Curve is very useful and can help adults recognise (therefore help children too) and notice the stages of anxiety for a child and help to develop the right strategies to use at the right point on the curve - see below.
- Anxiety and anger closely linked so anxiety can look like aggression.
- “Stress Bucket” is a good tool to use to help understand why it may seem a child overacts to one small thing (their bucket is already full!!!) Common when a child has been struggling at school all day with so many challenges.

Anxiety Curve





Does your school use the RNIB Bookshare Service? It's FREE!

Check to see if the school is part of the RNIB Bookshare scheme. Many schools do not realise that when they purchase text books, ANYONE with a 'print disability' can get a PDF copy of any textbook from the RNIB Bookshare Service:

[Information for students | UK education collection \(rnibbookshare.org\)](https://www.rnib.org.uk/information-for-students-uk-education-collection)

RNIB Bookshare is a free online service that provides accessible textbooks and resources for learners with sight loss, dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism and qualifying physical impairments.

During this time where so many children are learning from home, it's even more important that teachers and school staff add their learners to their school's RNIB Bookshare membership. This will allow learners to be independent in their home learning and able to access the resources they need. Please make sure you add your learners.

During the first lockdown the RNIB said that if a school doesn't access the service, then individual parents can apply. Email request to: bookshare@rnib.org.uk

EasyReader & RNIB Webinar Resources



We've now posted a [recording of the webinar available on YouTube](#) for you to watch again or to share with SEND colleagues.

Steve Bennett, [Dolphin Computer Access](#)
Stacy Scott, [RNIB Bookshare](#)



We are pleased to be able to reinstate **free access to the latest issue of First News**, providing a great resource to children that's both engaging and inspiring.

Confirm that you wish to receive First News by entering your email address [here](#). You will then receive an access code and link to find the latest digital edition.

Lockdown Learning

by Charmaine McKissock
26 June 2020



Author and Dyslexia specialist Charmaine McKissock has created a helpful guide for parents and carers to support learning during Lockdown. Struggling with dyslexia can feel frustrating, upsetting and tiring for everybody. The emotional and practical challenges of the Covid-19 situation have added another layer of upset to the learning experience. Charmaine explores the challenges, skills and huge benefits of helping dyslexic learners at home.

Is my learner falling behind at home?

Learners don't need to fall behind while they're away from formal school – quite the opposite. Some calm concentrated and careful one-to-one learning time with a trusted helper can have a real positive impact on their progress. You can help your learner regain confidence; overcome challenges that had been holding them back; and develop new transferrable skills. There is so much to say about those three simple words 'calm', 'concentrated' and 'careful': it's not possible to fully develop all these ideas in one short article, but I will give you a flavour of what I mean. You can find more practical help and guidance in 'Helping Kids with Wobbly Spelling'.

Are you worried about helping your learners?

When I train parents and other helpers to give their dyslexic learners extra tutoring at home, I start by empowering them to develop their own confidence as well as practical skills. For example, do you feel there aren't enough hours in the day to follow a learning routine with your learner? Well, if you follow the 'Pick & Stick' spelling method carefully, only a few minutes practice each day are needed. This is because doing 'little but often' is one of the key ingredients of the method.

The method also involves you getting to know the exact nature of your learner's strengths and weaknesses, and you are obviously best placed to do that. This intimate approach works best in a one-to-one situation. The programme is tailor-made for each individual, although the basic approach is the same for all learners.

And what's more, if you overcome a spelling block together, this can spill over into other areas such as reading or grammar, through a snowballing effect.

At the start of using the 'Pick and Stick' programme, the learner works in close partnership with their helper. Gradually, you'll notice your learner becoming more independent, at a speed that's right for them. In the next phase, you may notice a snowball effect, as the learner becomes more adventurous, resourceful and competent. They then become more independent in finding solutions to some very stubborn challenges.

Each programme is tailored to fit the needs and interests, abilities of an individual learner, so the bonus is that there are fewer behavioural issues to address. You will find some information about the 'Pick & Stick' method at the end of this article.

Do you need any special skills to teach at home?

Let me reassure you that you just need to:

- be open-minded and willing to take a fresh approach to learning (maybe very different from their own);
- have a sense of fun and adventure when guiding your learner;
- have patience and sticking power to keep your learner on track;
- have good understanding of guiding principles (see the Pick and Stick method below);
- have a selection of recommended but simple strategies at your fingertips, so you can be positive and confident about them with your learner;
- be flexible: you'll find many practical ideas and worksheets to use. I'm absolutely sure you'll want to tweak them to suit your particular learner and situation.

How does the Pick & Stick method work?

There are seven main ingredients that make the method work so well.

The Pick & Stick (P&S) method is multi-sensory: it uses sound, images, colour, touch, as well as movement. This really fixes spellings in your memory, as they are stored in different parts of the brain. Learners find out about their brains and how to boost learning power.



P&S trains the learner to develop curiosity and calm concentration. Learners find out how to pinpoint exactly what they find difficult, as they focus only on the 'problem' part of the word. They also learn methods to calm themselves down.

The learner finds an imaginative personal solution to the target word. Learners (supported by the helper) learn to use their own experiences and knowledge as an anchor for learning a new word.

The learner is never overloaded. They don't go onto learn anything new until previous learning is solid. Learnt words are stored in a personal 'bank' of words. The bank of words will grow slowly at first and then faster and faster, as the method rolls out.

The learner takes an active part in the programme and becomes progressively more independent. Your learner chooses the words that are important to them and one of the seven memory strategies that work best for them.

The learner practises at specific times and dates – for about 15 minutes several times a week. This routine reinforces and stores memories as effectively as possible.

Most importantly, Pick & Stick is fun and works. This reduces emotional upsets and behavioural issues. This also boosts self-esteem, motivation and confidence in learning.

Keep safe, be confident and get creative in teaching your learners at home!

About the author

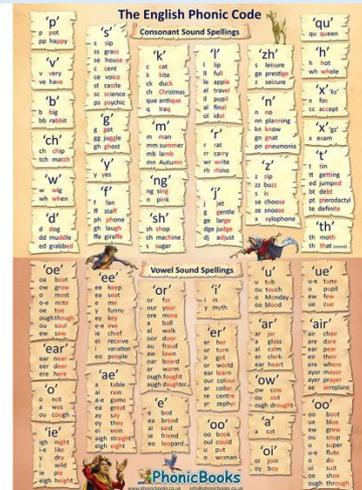
Charmaine McKissock has helped many individuals find ways to learn more easily and succeed in their goals. She has contributed widely to the understanding of dyslexia and other learning differences. She has worked in Education, Health and Community settings as a Senior Lecturer, trainer and manager. A past winner of the Observer's Young Writer's Competition, Charmaine has been commissioned to write and illustrate numerous publications for educational and community projects. She is the author of the innovative and highly popular 'Great Ways to Learn Anatomy & Physiology' published by Palgrave Macmillan and 'Helping Kids with Wobbly Spelling'. Visit her website www.wobblylearning.co.uk

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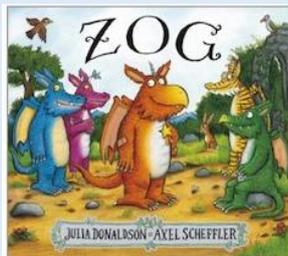
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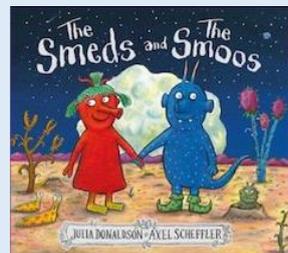
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FREE Parent ReaderPen Trials



Website: [Reader Pen | Scanning Pens Ltd](https://www.readerpen.co.uk/)

Scanning Pens has always offered free trials & training to all schools to level the playing field for young learners. For the first time ever, we're now offering parents **free trials**.

In response to recent school closures across the country, Scanning Pens is doing its best to ease the transition for students with reading difficulties. With many students not set-up for remote learning, it's important we approach strategies to ensure learners are able to continue building their literacy skills.

The following video was shown at the WDA/BDA Roadshow in March:

https://youtu.be/xjpkDE_HW7Q



Try our Nessy Fingers game for **FREE!**

<http://bit.ly/2sY8Aox>

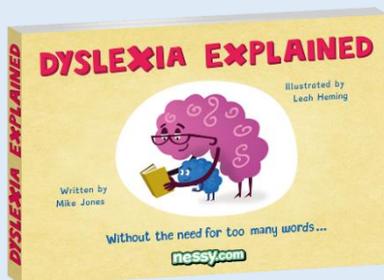
Test your child's touch typing today! For ages 7-12 and particularly useful for those with dyslexia.

[Nessy Numbers](#) | [Learn Times Tables](#) | [Multiplication Help](#)

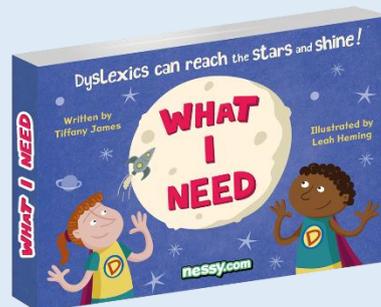


Subscribe to Dyslexia Explained!

Nessy has launched a brand new [Youtube channel](#) - for teachers and parents! Dyslexia Explained contains short videos to help teachers and parents understand dyslexia and how best to advocate for the children in their lives.



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Mathematics. Homeschooling. An Overview.

1 April 2020

Steve Chinn

Maths Explained Tutorials . . . [See More](#) [8 articles](#)
www.stevechinn.co.uk

In these difficult times for educating children, I thought I'd write down a few ideas and some advice from my experiences of teaching maths for many decades, lecturing and training teachers in over 30 countries, writing books and creating resources.

This could be a good time to consolidate knowledge and concepts, maybe yours as well as those of your children. Maybe this is an opportunity for learners to reflect instead of coping with busy, rushed curricula.

I'd be surprised if many of you don't think, 'It was different in my day!'. That is very likely, but basic maths is still basic maths. Methods and procedures come into fashion and slip way again. The maths is still about the same principles.

Homeschooling is a chance to make learning more about sharing than telling. A chance to make this a two-way process. An opportunity to discuss and explore understanding. And to use understanding to support memory.

Maths is very developmental, so this is a chance to go back to the basics. It's like building a wall. You need good foundations. You don't want there to be too many bricks missing. As I mentioned, maths tends to motor on without checking that the understanding is there. And, even at my great age, I still learn things about maths and teaching maths.

Learners.

Maths is maths and learners are learners, but they are so very inter-connected. I've been working on a new book, 'How to Teach Maths as it is to Learners as they are.' Sort of a culmination of all those years learning about learners and how to teach them as effectively as I can.

So, know your learner and how he/she learns - and what might stop them from learning. In all my years of teaching I have never met a 'perfect' learner. Sadly, my students never met a perfect teacher, at least not in my classroom.

Learners are a heterogeneous bunch. Maths requires a constellation of abilities, so remember that,

'Nothing works for everyone.' And
'Most things will work for someone.' And
Beware the quick cure/solution.

Some evidence about learning.

These are from experts that I rate. Details can be found in my 'Trouble with Maths' and 'Mathematics for Dyslexics and Dyscalculics' books

'Children who start behind generally stay behind.'

'Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. If their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information that they are taught, or they may learn them for the purposes of a test, *but then revert to their preconceptions outside the classroom.*

'Errors made in the initial stages of a pupil's contact with the various processes tend to become fixed. Initial errors persist and repeat themselves even after periods of apparently full mastery.'

'The programmes with greatest effect were strategy-based methods.'

'The highest effects accrued when teachers provided feedback data or recommendations to their students.' (The genuinely expressed question here is, '*How did you do that?*')

These times are a good opportunity to identify misconceptions and address them in a way that inhibits the wrong learning and replaces it with correct learning. Teaching is a multi-faceted skill.

Some of the learner factors to consider when teaching.

Effective communication is the key alongside giving your learners experiences of meaningful success.

There is a constellation of learning factors. Some key factors are:

Long term memory for mathematical facts and procedures.

Adequate short term and working memories.

Speed of processing (often exacerbated by the culture of doing maths quickly).

Anxiety (maybe I'll post a separate piece on this if you ask).

The symbols, vocabulary and language of maths.

Sequences, forward and backwards.

Generalising and patterns.

I now have a pretty poor short-term-memory. For me it's an age thing. If you fail to recall information, such as basic instructions, they're gone. Short term memory does not store information. So, when my wife says. 'I've told you that three times!' I say, 'Three more might do it!' A low capacity short term memory is an issue for some young learners. It's easy to adjust your communication to deal with the initial barrier to communication.

The teaching ethos.

Create an empathetic teaching and communicating style. This implies an active awareness and consequent acknowledgement and adjustment to the learning strengths and difficulties of learners, such as short term memory.

Have a responsive flexibility in the way you teach and share. Try to have a repertoire of resources and strategies which respond to the individual, and often changing, needs of the learner.

A source of teaching ideas and specially constructed worksheets: www.mathsexplained.co.uk



www.mathsexplained.co.uk

[Fun Study Techniques from Dekko Comics](#)

We're here to help.

In a time of uncertainty for teachers, schools and pupils, DYT is here to help. From free teaching resources to flexible professional development webinars, we'll help you to manage your return to virtual lessons and support every learner in your class.

Home-learning resources

We've collated some of our most popular teaching resources and adapted them for home-learning - perfect for sharing with parents to supplement your lesson plans. Check out our [home-learning resources](#), and let us know how your learners are getting on!

NEW: dyslexia-focused resources

We're excited to launch our new dyslexia-focused resources! Created with the graduated approach in mind, these resources are ideal for classroom teachers looking to better engage and support a specific learner who is struggling with literacy. [Explore the new resources now!](#)

Home learning with DYT

Our new Skimming, Scanning and Detailed Reading resource is ideal for learners who are reluctant to read. It's not always necessary to focus on every word in a piece of text; this resource will show them how and when to skim and scan instead! <https://lnkd.in/d/R2hEU>



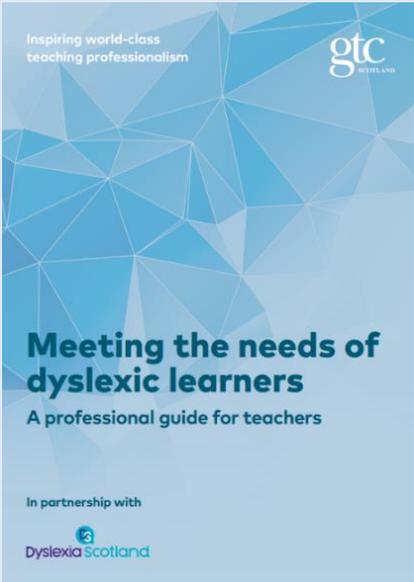
Dyslexia Scotland

GTC Scotland has published new Professional Guides for teachers focusing on additional support needs.

'Understanding neurodiversity in the context of equality and inclusive practice: a professional guide for teachers'
[Read the guide](#)

'Meeting the needs of dyslexic learners: a professional guide for teachers'
[Read the guide](#)

Please also see additional information at:
<https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets>





4 ways to help GCSE and A-level students with dyslexia

Remote learning put dyslexic students at a disadvantage, says this student - as he offers tips for better teacher support.

Ollie Wells (*Year 13 student*)

5th October 2020

Having tried desperately to focus on a recorded A-level ancient history class, I slumped against my bedroom desk: no subtitles or written alternative to the lesson were there to make absorbing the information possible. There was no one on hand to explain it, either.

That's when I realised: remote learning puts dyslexic students like me – particularly those studying for GCSEs and A-levels – at a real disadvantage.

Most schools have now returned to face-to-face teaching. But what lessons can teachers take away from the recent period of online learning about how to better support students with dyslexia?

And how can they make sure that those students are not again at a disadvantage in the event of a second lockdown?

GCSE and A-level adaptations

Students with dyslexia face challenges with reading, writing, processing information, memorising and organisation. I am not alone in finding that these issues were exacerbated during the recent shift to online education.

Caitlen Russell, a dyslexic student from Lincolnshire, also found it difficult to learn in lockdown.

"I've struggled with not actually being there in class, seeing the slides in person and being able to talk through the class," she says.

How to support students with dyslexia

So, what does this mean for lessons in the new term? Here are some tips for how teachers can support dyslexic students next term, both in classrooms and online.

Share resources in advance

Gillian Ashley, interim CEO of the [British Dyslexia Association](#) and a former teacher, says that it is important to give students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with content before consolidating it and enable them to ask any questions they may have in class.

"What teachers need to do is make sure that the pupils they're teaching with dyslexia have got the worksheets or the PowerPoint in advance of their lesson," she explains.

Make things multi-sensory

According to Ashley, one of the most effective ways to teach learners with dyslexia is to take a multi-sensory approach.

"We know for learners with dyslexia that things need to be taught in a multisensory way. That means they need to engage their senses at the same time," she says.

Allow for 'overlearning'

Students with dyslexia will also benefit from being given the opportunity to "overlearn", says Ashley.

"When we overlearn, we are fluent in what we're doing, we do it without thinking. That's what our teachers have got to begin to embed much more, particularly at secondary school," she says.

To support a dyslexic student with overlearning, the teacher would have to set extra worksheets or other activities on top of the classwork. And Ashley also stresses that recording virtual classes is fundamental here.

"We shouldn't be afraid to have our lessons recorded because we know that, if you've got dyslexia, just having that opportunity to go back to lesson content is essential – it's just about having that second and third chance."

Caitlen agrees that it would have been really helpful to have a recording of live lessons available for her to watch to consolidate any points she missed during online learning. Having the opportunity to have a video call with her teacher to talk through the lesson would also have been useful, she adds.

Make the most of apps

Software designed to help students with specific learning difficulties can be a fantastic way to make the school curriculum more accessible.

Though some technologies are costly, there are also very affordable options and others that are free.

Ashley recommends the "[Wheel of Apps](#)" resource, produced by CALL Scotland and the University of Edinburgh, which categorises apps according to the skills they support.

"It is a really nice resource because it covers key areas like reading, like spelling, like organisation, and it gives you all of the different apps that you can access for those things. Some of them are free and some are not," she explains.

The array of apps on this resource is its strength, as every dyslexic person has different tasks they find particularly difficult and their individual ways of working through them.

"I could give you different programmes but ultimately the most effective means of working has to be worked out by the learner themselves," Ashley says. "That's where, as schools, we need to start working really actively with our dyslexic learners so that their part of that process is working out how best they work."

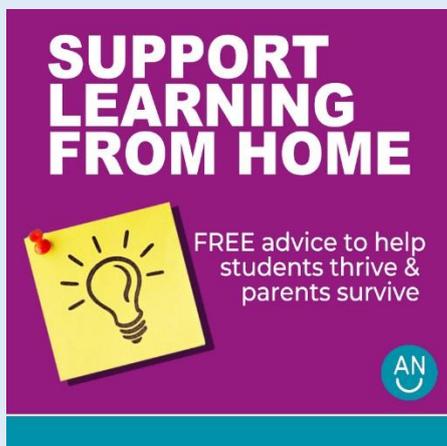


Caroline Bateman

is passionate about helping students with specific learning difficulties achieve their full potential. Her background and experience are predominantly with dyslexia, but she has found that the technology and techniques she uses are helpful for those with other learning difficulties.

[Achieve Now YouTube Channel](#)

While schools remain closed, parents need all the help they can get. Caroline has created a video to give parents ideas to support their children learning from home.



Click on the image above to watch the video

Caroline has also made the slides used (including helpful links) available to download.

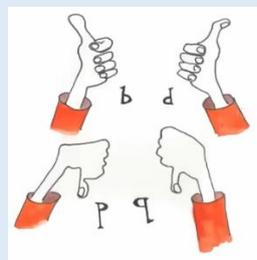


Click on the image above to download the slides used

Also – here are links for a recent webinar:

Keyboarding Skills - Session recording
Keyboarding Skills - Slides used

See also related information: **How touch typing can improve grades**



The team behind At Home with Dyslexia share their views on helping with spelling. Watch the video at: <https://lnkd.in/dZAfWEB>



UCL.AC.UK

Managing the transition to home schooling

Children may be experiencing a wide range of emotions during this transition, from fear and anxiety to excitement and enthusiasm. Even positive emotions can be unsettling. The following suggestions are designed to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone:

[Routines, routines, routines](#)
[Now and Next Cards](#)
[Collaborate when planning Education](#)
[Encouraging discussion Community](#)
[Helpful resources](#)

Homeschooling children with SEND

A series of information resources to help parents, carers and families support pupils with SEND at home during the period of school closures.

Resources already available:

[Cognition and learning: independent working](#)
[Cognition and learning: maths, numeracy and numbers](#)
[Cognition and learning: study skills](#)
[Communication and interaction: wellbeing and learning](#)
[Early years](#)
[Real life learning](#)
[Sensory and physical impairment](#)
[Social, emotional and mental health for young people](#)
[Social, emotional and mental health for families](#)

BUILDING A DYSLIXIC CHILD'S SELF IMAGE

- Tell your child that their difficulty has a name, *dyslexia*.
- Tell your child that dyslexia is a problem that intelligent people have with reading.
- Reassure your child that dyslexia has nothing to do with how smart they are.
- Tell your child that their problem is caused by a problem in pulling apart the sounds of words.
- Reassure your child that many people have this common problem and that it can be helped by the right teaching.
- Tell your child that they will learn to read.
- Tell your child about the many famous people who are smart, successful, and also dyslexic.

Assistive technology

Providing support for teachers, students, and parents

The diversity of learning needs demands school systems provide inclusive, accessible learning environments that inspire confidence and encourage independence differently for each student. Learn about how to create a personalized and engaging remote learning experience for all of your students through the resources provided in the sections below at this link:

[Explore Microsoft's special education and accessibility resources for remote learning.](#)

Accessible technologies to help students with disabilities unlock their full potential by addressing the diversity of needs.



Supports for students with inclusive personalized non-stigmatizing tools starting in the primary grades through graduation.



Preparing all students to be independent with workforce ready skills for higher education and as they begin careers.



Knowledge to advocate for the technology and tools needed to be successful and independent in the workplace and life.

Reading, writing, math

- Immersive Reader
- Independently digitize materials with Office Lens
- Dictate content across Office 365
- Word prediction to assist with writing
- Breaking content in smaller parts with Headings in Word
- Built in math tools in OneNote

Speech, language, communication

- Practice speaking with PowerPoint Presentation Coach
- Practice conversational learning with Flipgrid
- Reading and listening to text with Immersive Reader
- Process auditory language with live captions
- Respond to prompts using the Chat feature in Teams

Neurodiversity

- Minimize distractions with Immersive Reader, Focus Assist, Focus Mode, and Reading view
- Writing assistance with Learning Tools, Word Prediction, and Dictation
- Stay organized using To Do on any device
- Complete work alternatively using Flipgrid, Digital Inking, Sway, PowerPoint Screen Recorder, Whiteboard

Hearing

- Personalize the computer with the Ease of Access Center
- Use subtitles in Teams, Translator, PowerPoint Presentation Translator
- Add captions to videos in PowerPoint, Sway and Stream
- Turn on video during a Teams meetings for live interpretation

Mental health

- Opportunities to connect with students and families with video chat feature in Teams
- SEL through lessons in Minecraft
- Alternative content creation with Flipgrid, digital inking, PowerPoint recording, Sways, Whiteboard
- Data collection (such as ABC data) through Forms

Mobility

- Personalize the computer with the Ease of Access Center
- Dictate presentations and documents
- Use computer with Keyboard only and on-screen keyboard
- Sticky keys and filter keys for one handed access
- Speech recognition to control the computer
- Engage computer using eye control and 3rd party tracking devices
- Play with others using the Xbox adaptive controller

Vision

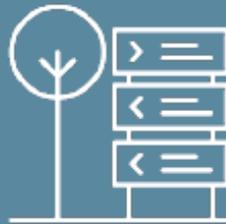
- Personalize the computer with the Ease of Access Center
- Accessibility checker to ensure all content is accessible
- Built in screen reader with Narrator in Windows 10
- Independently digitize materials with Office Lens
- AI translates the visual world into an audible experience
- Basic coding for younger students with Code Jumper

Executive Function

- Planning with To Do
- Scheduling in Planner and Outlook
- Breaking down tasks in OneNote and Navigation in Word
- Organization in Outlook, OneNote, and Teams



Assistive technology explained



Assistive technology can make a real difference to how learners with dyslexia, literacy difficulties and/or SEND access the curriculum.

.....



Benefits of using assistive technology include:

Increased learner independence
.....

Workplace skillsets
.....

Unlocked cognitive potential
.....

AT can be used in all GCSEs and functional skills including English and maths
.....

To get the most out of assistive technology, **both the teacher and the learner need to commit to adapting how they work** – Teachers will need to embed the use of assistive technology into their planning and lesson content, and work with learners to rethink how they approach a task.

Teachers will also need to ensure that some forward planning is done to make text and worksheets compatible for computers. Text from books, if full prose, can be scanned with a smartphone and added as a scanned document.



Free assistive technology options



Built-in assistance

There are several free functions that are included or can be added to a PC or laptop to support learners:

	Windows/Office	Mac	Chrome	IOS	Android
Text to speech	yes	yes	with extension	yes	yes
Colour Filters/Background	limited	limited	with extension	yes	limited
Speech Recognition	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Predictive Text	external keyboard	touch bar	with extension	yes	yes
Spell check/dictionary	yes	yes	yes	yes	spell check

Thanks to Abl James (a.james@soton.ac.uk) for the content of this table.

Immersive Reader – Microsoft Word Online

Microsoft Word Online offers one particularly useful add on called Immersive Reader. Its functions let you:

- Read text aloud
- Change the text's language for EAL learners
- Highlight verbs and nouns in a body of text
- Focus on a single line or paragraph using text windows
- Add symbols to words (useful for non-verbal learners)

Immersive Reader can be found under the 'View' tab in any document opened in Word Online.

Products you can purchase

Some learners, especially those that struggle to access and create written information, may need more support than the freely available assistive technology outlined above.

Reading pens

These pens track text and read it line by line. They are discreet and can be preferred by older learners in the classroom if laptops and tablets are not a common sight.

They are allowed in all exams and mean that schools don't need to apply for electronic versions of exam papers or place learners in separate exam rooms.

While the upfront cost per pen is expensive, they can be used by more than one student – so you can order a batch to be shared across school years and cohorts.

Clicker 8 and Docs Plus



Both of these programmes are enhanced word processor programmes, with scaffolds to support writing.

- Clicker 8 – best suited to primary schools
- Docs Plus - designed for secondary schools and compatible with exam conditions

The benefit of both of these programme is their adaptability. Scaffolds are embedded and include planning templates, cloze activities, and word banks. They both also have a feature which predicts the word being typed and supplies several options to choose from.

Teacher dashboards also allow you to track the learner's progress and gauge how much additional time they might need for timed assessments.

However, both programmes require a PC or tablet and require the learner to have their own account, so the cost per learner could make this an expensive option.



These options have all been tested by our consultant teacher, Kelly Challis.

Claread

Claro have a whole suite of useful programmes which can support both reading and writing. These include mind mapping, fluency support, word banks and speech to text.

Read&Write

This programme has several options and runs as an added tab which can be accessed for any programme or webpage you have open. It needs to be downloaded to individual PCs or laptops.

Other uses for **technology**

Supporting organisational skills

Pupils with literacy difficulties can benefit from supporting their organisational skills as well as their literacy skills and this is where technology comes into its own.

Arguably, the best tool for organisation is the smartphone:

- Set reminders for lessons and deadlines
- Enable speech to text
- Type out notes (rather than hand-write)
- Take pictures to upload later to a PC or laptop.



However, it's worth noting that although smartphones are fast becoming the norm, not all learners will have access to one.

Get pocket

This is a great visual website for aiding organisation and saving links and documents in one place:
www.getpocket.com



Thinking visually

Being able to think visually and use diagrams can help learners who find writing lists and linear planning difficult.

Products like **Microsoft OneNote** and **Google Doc's Draw** allow you to create diagrams and structure tasks, add new pages and write anywhere on the page.

Glossary of resources

Clicker 8 and Docs Plus: www.cricksoft.com

Claroread: www.clarosoftware.com

Read&Write: www.dyslexic.com

Immersive Reader: www.onenote.com/learningtools

Scanning pens: www.scanningpens.co.uk

GDocs Draw: docs.google.com/drawings



There are lots of programmes out there to support learners with literacy difficulties and they are a valuable resource for any classroom. They need investment and support for both the learner and the teacher to ensure that it becomes the normal way of working.

Let us know how you get on

We would love to hear your experiences with assistive technology!
Find us on Twitter [@DriverTrust](https://twitter.com/DriverTrust) and at driveryouthtrust.com



Harness features that help us all do our best work with Windows 10, Office 365 and Microsoft Teams.

We know how demanding the recent times have been for many of us with remote working, in addition to balancing home and work life, and that is why we have created these Tips & Tricks videos delivered by the Microsoft UK Accessibility Champions that we are hoping you will love.

Use this link - [Microsoft 365 Tips & Tricks - Microsoft UK](#) to access the following information:

Teams Meetings

Thrive in your meetings with Microsoft Teams inclusive capabilities.

Microsoft Word Coaching

Develop impactful content in Word with Dictate and Editor.

Play my emails

Why not use "Play my emails" for a touch free email triage?

Outlook Accessibility Checker

Why not let others know you prefer to receive accessible email content?

Quiet Hours

Better manage your work-life balance with Quiet hours.

Immersive Reader

Customise the way in which you consume information from text size, to decluttering of the page, to read aloud, line focus and much more.

Outlook Meeting Length

Allow yourself to take a bit of a breather by modifying your meeting duration.

Read Out Loud

Learn how Magnifier and Read aloud are better together.

PowerPoint Designer

Deliver impactful presentations with the help of Design Ideas.

Themes in Teams

Customise your Microsoft Teams to your preferences.

Translator

Better collaborate with others across languages with the help from Translate.

Teams Live Captions

Leverage captions in Microsoft Teams to improve your meeting experience.

Dynamic Lock

Ever forgotten to lock your device? With Dynamic Lock you will not need to worry anymore.

OneNote

Learn how to use OneNote to take your meeting notes and have it converted into text following a simple step.

Colour Filters

Why not leverage colour filters to improve your visibility of what is on screen?

Night Light

Learn how to turn on Night light on Windows 10 to reduce the impact that blue light has on you.



British Assistive
Technology Association

[Accessible Education Webinars : BATA :
British Assistive Technology Association
\(bataonline.org.uk\)](https://www.bataonline.org.uk)

This series of webinars was put on by the BATA Educationalists Group in 2019. We feel the information contained in these webinars should be shared with a wider audience hence it is being posted onto the website now.

Patrick McGrath (Texthelp) helped us put on this series which focussed on accessible education - making assistive technology better known and embedded into normal practice. Also, we looked at different uses of AT in society and future trends with particular reference to the education sector. To view a webinar just click on the title. Each webinar lasts one hour so there are seven hours of watching if you did the whole series!

Alternative Methods of Recording - Myles Pilling (BATA) and Lee Chambers (Assistive Technology Specialist, Sonocent)

AT in Mainstream - Myles Pilling (BATA) and Patrick McGrath (Edtech Strategist, Texthelp)

AT from BETT - Myles Pilling (BATA)

Exam Arrangements - Use of AT in Exams - Abi James (AbilityNet), Julia Clouter (Scanning Pens) Laura O'Hare (Texthelp)

Study Skills and Presentation Tools - Myles Pilling (BATA), Matt Dean (COO, Aventido) and Patrick McGrath (Edtech Strategist, Texthelp)

Smart Revolution and The Internet of Things - Paul Doyle (Bush Associates)

Outcomes from the DFE Edtech Strategy - Myles Pilling (BATA)

"Assistive Technology for ALL Using Ambitious Teaching"

Educationalist Group Webinar - 18 November. Click on a title to access the content.

<https://www.bataonline.org.uk/articles/assistive-technology-allwebinar-recordings>

KEYNOTE: [Assistive Technology for ALL Using Ambitious Teaching - Carol Allen](#)

Talks:

[Low Tech to High Tech - Helen Simon](#)

[How does technology enhance maths learning and support learners who struggle - Peter Jarrett](#)

[Impact of technology in the classroom - the Malta Experience - Roger Broadbent](#)

[Reaching all children during Covid-19 - Janet Goring](#)

Demonstrations:

[Claro Writing Helper - Stuart Marsden](#)

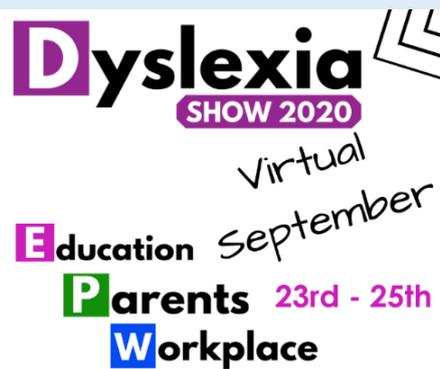
[Keyboarding Skills - Caroline Bateman](#)

[Dragon Speech Recognition - Liz Halifax-Smith](#)

Discussion Group: **Low cost/Free AT**

Attendees were sent this link to access a few of the presentation notes as well as discount offers and free trials from presenters. More recordings will be added to the page.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LXmnl2B_163N1jbbJJLmRkCV1NIQp?usp=sharing



Missed September Virtual?

Check out [September Highlights](#)

We were delighted to have a number of organisations work with us to support this amazing event, along with having 4 excellent keynotes delivered by professionals, including our three dyslexia charities here in the UK, along with professionals from Education, Parents and the Workplace.



For the past 3 years Microsoft have been demonstrating free accessibility tools that are built into Microsoft 365 and Windows 10.

This free webinar/video will give you the history of where Microsoft has come from and where it is today on how we can support every student in every organisation to achieve more.

Topics covered:

- Microsoft 365 accessibility
- Read aloud tools
- Dictation and Transcription
- Communication



This is a free webinar prepared by Arran Smith for teachers, TAs and senior leaders.

[Microsoft 365 Accessibility Update November 2020 - YouTube](#)

[Jo Crawford](#)



This my personal experience with dyslexia - I hope to create a friendly community for dyslexics, where we can share our advice, stories and support, to help people realise they're not alone!!! Obviously this is a very brief overview of my experience, missing out countless cases of my mum having to complain, me really struggling with my work and so forth.... I thought that was an obvious given and didn't have to be included!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JH4gie9vHps&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0Emr02Njdf6O7rDCI9oUBdSmcS-itOWLqYFbLXD_atWuTKnfsCR7OJbA



It is our mission to train every teacher to spot, support and empower every dyslexic child.

Right now, we know that:

- 1 in 5 children are dyslexic
- But 80% of those dyslexic children leave school unidentified
- 98% say teachers need more training to spot & support dyslexia

At Made By Dyslexia, we're changing this – classroom by classroom – by creating **free online training** that helps teachers to spot, support & empower every dyslexic learner. It's available to every school, in every country, all around the world.

When every dyslexic child is spotted and supported, and all teachers are trained to value and nurture dyslexic strengths, we'll create a fairer world for all.

We've partnered with Microsoft to offer free, online, training. It includes easy to implement strategies used in the world's leading dyslexic schools.

Take the free training:

[Part 1 & Part 2](#)

Thanks for all your support,
Kate Griggs
CEO & Founder, Made By Dyslexia



<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/> including:

[Addressing Reading Difficulties](#)

[Inclusive Learning Resources](#)

[iPad Apps for Learners with Dyscalculia/Numeracy Difficulties](#)

[iPad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia](#)

[iPad Apps to Support Creativity](#)

[Raising Attainment with Microsoft Learning Tools](#)

[Supporting Writing Difficulties](#)

[Using the iPad to Support Dyslexia](#)

[Download the professional learning leaflet](#)

Their **FREE** webinars last for 20 minutes – watch live, or a recording:

<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/professional.../webinars/>



Made By Dyslexia

28 October at 01:00 · 🌐

❤️ We LOVE this piece of writing by Ellanean Jarvis, 13 #MadeByDyslexia Check it out! "Lockdown has let me discover, like an intrepid explorer, my hidden talents..& see that through my hidden talent of art & creativity it's possible for me to fly with my own magnificent wings." 🦋

MY DYSLLEXIA

(This story is written in different colours to help other people with dyslexia!)

Hi I'm Ellanean and I'm 13 years old. I have ADD and Dyslexia. One of my hidden talents is my Dyslexia! In this story, I will take you with me on my journey of learning how to value my dyslexia, not as a problem but as a hidden talent!

Ever since I was a baby I have had dyslexia. It has been very hard for me to see this as a positive thing, and a hidden talent - it's difficult for me to do things that other people find easy. It's like I've landed in a foreign country - and I can't speak the language (I'm learning Japanese and a bit of Italian from my stepdad in lockdown)!

Close your eyes when you read this. Imagine this. You step off the plane on holiday and you forget the language you just learned for the whole year. You have to find your hotel but you can't remember how to say the name. You look for someone who can speak your language - asking everyone you bump into in this new country and you find someone that speaks your language and you find it at last. Sometimes it makes me sad, that I'm left behind. But lockdown has let me discover, like an intrepid explorer, the hidden talents that dyslexia hides.

I found my own wings to fly in lockdown that describe me - literally! My hidden talent is building, using my hands and my imagination to engineer my very own pair of extraordinary working wings. I have to add the feathers - but the frame for my massive wings is finished. It has shown me that not only am I good with my hands, but that I have the potential to fly, even with dyslexia. When I put the wings that I built on, I feel like anything is possible and it makes me proud.

I see myself as a magnificent bird, free to roam the amazing world wherever I want to go. Sometimes, as I fly over the treacherous ocean, the sea spits and growls at me but I rise above it, where its claws can't reach me. That's how I like to imagine the things I find almost impossible - like reading, writing and English. But I know, through my hidden talent of art and creativity that it's possible for me to fly with my own magnificent wings.

In lockdown, I found hidden pathways in the forest around my little woodland home. I'm good at finding secret pathways wherever I go and that taught me that sometimes a talent can't be obvious, it can be hidden and you have to find it yourself. Sometimes a path to something can take a different route, especially with dyslexia, but you will get there eventually.

Finding out that dyslexia was a hidden talent in lockdown made me realise that there is talent in everything and everyone. It can be any shape or form.



DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY