



Reading hints and tips...

for parents of reluctant
and struggling readers

**Dyslexia
Action**

Taking Action • Changing Lives

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Creating enthusiastic readers

The more you read, the easier it becomes; but for those who struggle with words, reading will not be a source of fun, and it is easy to become disheartened and unwilling to keep trying.

How can you help?

What can you do to maintain children's enthusiasm for reading? What can you do to help them improve their skills? What can you do to help them become independent readers? Here are some suggestions:

- When reading with your child, be as comfortable and relaxed as possible
- Make reading part of your children's daily routine and not something they 'have' to do
- Try to make it as much fun as you can: use different voices for the characters or use role play – you be one character and encourage your child to be another.

Helpful reading tips

1. Reading to your child – Reading starts with listening. Read to your children as much as you can. It not only improves listening skills and makes them feel good about reading. It also improves vocabulary and understanding of the way stories are 'built up'.

2. Shared and supported reading – Encourage your child to join in by:

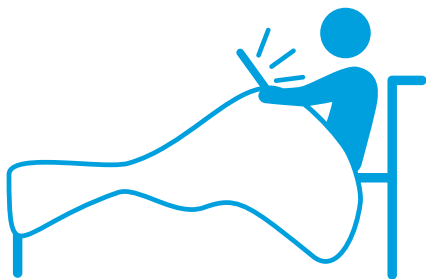
- Discussing the book's content and asking your child to describe what is happening, or might happen
- Retelling the story in their own words
- Running your finger along the line of print as you read to help your child see what you are reading, to aid familiarity of the words
- Suggest your child joins in by reading some words
- Selecting two or three words or main characters to talk about
- Allowing your child time to work out words
- Helping with accuracy – encourage your child to improve guesswork by cross-checking letters in a word.



The Dyslexia Action Shop offers a DIY Support Pack, developed with parents in mind to assist children with reading.
Visit: www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk.

3. Over learning – Re-reading books, together or alone, builds confidence, fluency and comprehension. Do not ‘race’ to get to the next ‘reading level’. Going over story information and who the characters are or re-reading important information helps to reinforce understanding of the story, especially if your child has a poor short-term memory. This also helps to build familiarity with the vocabulary used within the book.

4. Silent reading – It is a great step when children move from reading aloud to silent reading, but take care that children with difficulties are not just ‘guessing’. It is a good idea to check comprehension by asking your child about the story or to help them write a ‘book report’. Silent reading is important to develop independence, fluency and stamina but wherever possible, children should be encouraged to talk about what they have read.



5. Choose books carefully. You might think about:

- **Areas of interest** – children will persist much more if the subject of the book is one that appeals to them
- **Level of interest** – Be careful not to use ‘babyish’ books with older struggling readers – they need to have their imagination engaged, and their efforts rewarded
- Try to find books with vocabulary familiar to the reader, and if there are new words, try to talk about these beforehand
- Books with the text broken up into short sentences and paragraphs are good as they help to keep pace, maintain interest and give a feeling of progress
- It is good to find pictures with captions, call-outs and boxed-text to break up the main text into manageable chunks.

6. Use audio books and text-to-speech software – Audio books are not just the next step in reading to your child. They are a great alternative to reading on paper. Your local library will have lots of audio books in different formats (CDs, MP3s, smartphones or even tapes). You can also join a subscription library like Calibre, or a commercial one like Audible. Sometimes your child will have to read lots of information online but it is not available as an audiobook. Try having the computer read it to them using text-to-speech software.

7. Fun, fun, fun! – Above all reading should be a pleasure. We understand that it can be frustrating when children have difficulties and seem not to remember words even from one line to the next. Try to always be positive and do not let helping with reading become a battle! Remember there are others who have much training and experience in helping children who find it hard. Your main job as a parent is to be supportive and encouraging.

Dyslexia Action can provide individual help to people with literacy or numeracy difficulties. We also provide training for teachers and awareness and advice sessions for parents and others. Please contact your nearest Dyslexia Action Learning Centre to find out more.

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*All our practitioner psychologists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and meet their standards.

The information in this leaflet was correct at the time of print (September, 2014)
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