

Helen Arkell

Believe Achieve Succeed

Questions about Dyslexia?



www.helenarkell.org.uk

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a difficulty with words; it affects a person's ability to read accurately and fluently. Dyslexia can affect all aspects of learning from reading and writing to maths, memory, organisation and concentration. It is understood that one in ten people have dyslexia.

How do I know if my child is dyslexic?

Dyslexia manifests itself in many different ways. The most common symptoms of dyslexia are problems encountered with any of the following: reading, writing, spelling, organisation, memory, word retrieval and speed of processing. You may have noticed difficulties with some of these. There are also other well known 'at risk' factors such as a family history of similar difficulties.

Many of the difficulties are common during a child's first year or two at school. However, if a group of these symptoms persist beyond the time when the average child has grown out of them, this may indicate dyslexia and expert advice should be sought.

How do I go about getting my child tested?

If you are concerned that your child may have dyslexia, first discuss this with your child's class teacher. You could also arrange a meeting with the school's SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) to discuss your concerns and thoughts. The SENCo may be able to carry out assessment or screening to give an indication of possible dyslexic difficulties.

You can have your child privately assessed, however you will have to pay for this. At Helen Arkell, we offer a bursary fund for those who need help with the cost of an assessment. As a starting point, you could come and have a consultation with one of our experienced professionals in order to gain a better understanding of what is going on. We can then work together to see if an assessment is appropriate.

When should a child be assessed for dyslexia?

Dyslexia can be identified by a series of straightforward tests tailored to be taken by anybody from the ages of 5 upwards. However, identifying dyslexia in younger children can be difficult for both parents and teachers, because the

signs and symptoms are not always obvious. Many children develop ways of compensating for their dyslexia which can mask their difficulties.

It is useful to identify dyslexia early as this means a person has more time to develop the coping strategies to meet his/her individual challenges.

Why does it take schools so long to pick up on/diagnose dyslexia?

Teachers at your child's school will be monitoring his/her progress carefully right from the first day in school. It is quite difficult to decide how early an assessment should take place because some of the characteristics of dyslexia can be noted in the normal development of young children. However, if the child has not made the expected progress throughout the first year of school then at that point a formal assessment could be considered.

Schools may use a dyslexia screening test to give an indication of possible dyslexic difficulties and will then put in place relevant support for your child.

Does my child need an Educational Psychologist Report?

An Educational Psychologist assessment provides the more detailed analysis needed for those with more severe or complex learning differences.

What is the connection between dyslexia and dyspraxia?

There is a lot of overlap between the signs and symptoms of dyspraxia and dyslexia. Research suggests that 52% of children (Dyspraxia Foundation, 2013) with dyslexia display features of dyspraxia.

Dyspraxia, a form of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults. There may be additional problems planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations. Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought. Although dyspraxia may occur in isolation it frequently coexists with other conditions such as dyslexia, the term used to describe a difficulty in learning to read, write and spell, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), language disorders and social, emotional and behavioural impairments.

When should you consider a Specialist Dyslexia School?

For many children mainstream schooling will meet their needs. However, for those with more complex needs 'a mainstream placement may not be right, or not right just yet.' (DfEEa1998, p23). On his website, Gavin Reid states that '...full inclusion in a mainstream setting for some groups of children, although socially desirable, may not be educationally appropriate at a given point in time.' He goes on to say that '...with support all children can aspire towards an inclusive educational environment but there should not be an assumption that for all this is the best practice at every point in their school career'.

It is worth considering whether your child is learning in an environment where his/her needs are fully supported.

Should I find a dyslexia tutor for my child?

Sometimes children need an extra 'boost' to help them with learning. This may help them to discover more about the way they learn and strategies that can be put in place to support their difficulties. This extra support can be for a short period of time or for longer should your child need it.

How do I help my child with self-esteem?

A child's self-esteem is very important. Many children who find learning difficult can get frustrated and demotivated which may lead to low self-esteem. Make sure your child understands what having dyslexia means for him/her, as knowing there is a reason for his/her difference can be a turning point. Knowing that these difficulties are not an indicator of a general lack of ability can be reassuring and, at the same time, a child needs to be helped to understand that he/she may have to work twice as hard as his/her peers to achieve similar results. Support, understanding and realistic target setting are useful ways of maintaining a positive self-image.

Hints, Encouragement and Liaison for Parents!

Course for Parents

Learning to learn – come and find out about ways to support your child. Join us for a six session course for parents, led by professional staff from the Helen Arkell Centre.

Testimonials

"Brilliant! Fun and entertaining! You just want to go back each week!"

"Interesting, informative, friendly, supportive and engaging! And I've made lots of new friends!"

"I feel so much more confident now! Thank you."

"Thank you! We now feel that we have a fuller understanding of dyslexia and access to lots of useful tools and strategies. We can support our child now! Fantastic!"

- Session 1** Introduction to SpLDs, focusing on dyslexia.
Having the conversation.....and self-esteem.
- Session 2** Learning preferences and study skills.
- Session 3** Reading accuracy and comprehension ideas and strategies
- Session 4** Spelling – ideas and strategies.
- Session 5** Numeracy – ideas and strategies.
- Session 6** Helping with homework and talking to schools.

When? The course takes place over six sessions

The times are usually from 10.00am – 1.00pm

Where? It takes place at the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre but also runs at other venues.

Please contact the Centre on 01252 792400 or look on the website for dates.
www.helenarkell.org.uk/courses

At Helen Arkell, we help in many ways:

- Assessments
- Consultations
- Specialist Tuition
- Courses for Parents
- Courses for Children and Young People
- Professional Courses and CPD
- Skills Development for Adults
- In-service for schools
- Workplace Support for Employers and Employees
- Presentations
- Webinars
- Shop and online ordering

Please see our website for details or give us a ring! We would love to help.

01252 792400

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At Helen Arkell, we are passionate about removing barriers to learning and life, such as dyslexia. We want to promote unsung skills, champion new ways of approaching life. We give people the tools they need to learn in their own way. We train dedicated professionals to inspire people to love learning. We help parents to nurture their children and employers to support their staff.

Together we inspire people to believe in themselves, achieve their goals and succeed on their own terms.

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