

Termly Newsletter - Issue 1

Spring 2012

Welcome...



Thank you for volunteering to be part of our national team of Parent Champions.

It's great to have nearly 100 of you on board – from across the UK. We've had lots of interest internationally too with Parent Champions from countries as far afield as Zimbabwe and USA.

Welcome to our very first newsletter. It's packed full of information to help parents and carers of children with specific learning difficulties and dyslexia. We hope you'll find it useful – and please pass it on to anyone else who you think will find it helpful too.

You've also received Parent Champion posters. We'd like you to see if you can get them displayed in a prominent place in your local community. It may be a local school, church, hospital or community group. You'll be helping us to get the message out there about the expertise and support available through The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust and its partner organisations.

We're all in at the beginning of a very exciting initiative and we want your help to make sure we provide the support that parents and carers really need. Each month on the Parent Champion website, we'll be interviewing an expert and giving you the opportunity to get answers to the questions that are important to you. There's one subject more than any other that so many of you want more information on – how schools and parents can work together to help children achieve their potential. Our first interview will be 'Parents and Schools – Working Together To Make A Difference For Children'. If you have any specific questions about approaching schools, what to expect from teachers, finding out about assessments etc that you want to ask our expert, email them today to social@parentchampions.org.uk

We want to build our national team of Parent Champions so it would be really good if you can encourage others to sign up too. We've got postcards with information about Parent Champions that we can send you to hand out at meetings if you run or attend a support group – or to mums and dads you may chat to in the playground.

Lots of you have been signing up to Parent Champions on Facebook and Twitter. Do take a look and join us if you would like to - it's a great way to get in touch with our national team of Parent Champions across the country. You'll see we've been busy sharing experience and tips.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lorraine Thomas
National Team Parent Champions

Parent Champion Survey

We're also conducting our first Parent Champion Survey. We'd like to hear from you because your views are important to us and help us to ensure we deliver the support that is relevant to you and parents and carers in your community. It would be great if you can spend a few minutes to email us your answer to the following question:

“What is the top issue that you think parents and carers of children with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia find the most stressful to deal with?”

Send your answers today to
social@parentchampions.org.uk

Expert advice



British Dyslexia Association

The British Dyslexia Association has many services to support and help parents from training to campaigns.

Our **National Helpline** is probably our best resource for anyone with queries about dyslexia. The Helpline provides information, advice and signposting, all of which is completely impartial enabling the caller to make important choices and decisions for themselves. If you're ever worried about how to get an assessment for your child; how a school is addressing the matter; how you as a parent can help or if you have any other dyslexia related questions or concerns, this is the line to call.

National Helpline Telephone Number: **0845 251 9002**

We have many free online resources for parents:

Our website: Here you can find information on the indications of dyslexia, how to get help for your child, homework tips and lots more.

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/parents.html>

E-learning site with free materials for parents: This is a web-based library of resources for parents and carers of downloadable information sheets. These cover a variety of topics from defining what dyslexia is, to advice on SEN tribunals. The E-Learning site will be updated with new information as it becomes available. In addition, the site is an excellent social base for parents to share knowledge, join in with popular discussions on the parents forum or by using our blogging feature. **<http://bda.moodle.overnetdata.com>**

Translated Information Leaflets: A suite of useful information leaflets about dyslexia have now been translated into Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Somali, Polish and Arabic in order to help parents for whom English is a second language. These leaflets will be available to download from the BDA and DST websites towards the end of March. The popular Questions about Dyslexia? leaflet produced by The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust, will also be available in hard copy from the Trust office.



Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre

Homework can cause a lot of grief for parents and children as stress levels can be high. The following pointers can suggest some strategies that you can experiment with.

General homework tips:

- Establish a predictable routine
- Allow 'down time'
- Allow your child to have some control over the time homework is done
- Find a quiet place and make sure pens and paper are readily available
- Make sure your child understands what he has to do. Talk through the task. When helping your child, keep your explanation as simple and practical as possible
- Be realistic
- Set a time frame for each subject. If set homework is not completed in time allowed, send a note to school explaining how much time has been spent on task
- Help your child to prioritise homework. Encourage him/her to tackle the hardest homework first
- Break it down into manageable chunks
- Negotiate with the class teacher: Can you act as scribe? Can the homework be word processed? Can it be presented in an alternative format, e.g. timeline, diagram?

It is always a good idea to discuss issues with your child's teacher who should know if the activities are taking much longer than the suggested time or if the task is too difficult. Find out how you can help.



Dyslexia Action

The DIY Readers' Support Pack for parents has been developed by Dyslexia Action with parents in mind. It takes into account extensive research evidence about the best way to support children who struggle from the very beginning to 'catch on' with reading. The pack offers a balanced approach to learning to read:

- **early skills training** – a series of structured exercises to establish sound to letter links and early sound blending
- **reading activities** – a range of activities for practicing and extending reading skills using books from home and school.

Suitable for children who are beginning to learn to read and those who need additional help.

The pack comes complete with a 52-page booklet containing a series of carefully prepared timed exercises and activities together with guidance for parents and/or carers. Also included are a 25 minute explanation film on DVD, 144 cards and a stopwatch. Available from the Dyslexia Action shop for £40.

All Dyslexia Action Centres offer free half-hour consultations to parents and carers (please contact us for an appointment) as well as assessments, screenings, tuition and consultancy.

Bath	Tel: 01225 420554	Lincoln	Tel: 01522 539267
Bristol	Tel: 0117 9239166	Liverpool	Tel: 0151 4286987
Cardiff	Tel: 02920 481122	London	Tel: 0207 3912030
Coventry	Tel: 02476 257041	Newcastle	Tel: 0191 2818381
Chelmsford	Tel: 02476 257041	Nottingham	Tel: 0115 9483849
Darlington	Tel: 01325 283580	Peterborough	Tel: 01733 234956
Derby	Tel: 01332 365659	Sheffield	Tel: 0114 2815905
Egham	Tel: 01784 222325	Stone	Tel: 01785 818783
Glasgow	Tel: 0141 3344549	Sutton Coldfield	Tel: 0121 3546855
Harrogate	Tel: 01423 522111	Tonbridge	Tel: 01732 352762
Hull	Tel: 01482 329416	Wilmslow	Tel: 01625 530158
Leeds	Tel: 0113 2888144	Winchester	Tel: 01962 856195
Leicester	Tel: 01162511525	York	Tel: 01904 634588



Springboard for Children

Springboard for Children provides one-to-one literacy teaching for children who struggle with learning to read, write, speak and listen. We work with schools and families to help children unlock their learning potential.

Research shows that reading to a young child is the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education. We have produced 'A Parent's Little Guide to Helping Children Read – Ten Top Tips for Busy Mums, Dads and Carers'. It is also available in Arabic, Bangla, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish and Turkish. We also run a range of courses for parents and carers in schools, communities and the workplace.

For full details on our booklet and all of our courses, take a look at our website: www.springboard.org.uk

Interview...

PARENT CHAMPION IN THE SPOTLIGHT



ANGELA KELLY
mother of Carl (12)
and Sean (10)

How did you hear about Parent Champions?

I was looking on the BDA website and came across it and thought it was a fantastic idea.

What made you decide to become a Parent Champion?

Having a child with dyslexia, I fully understand how it feels to not have a clue how to help your child learn and feel like you are the only parent going through it.

What makes you passionate about supporting parents and carers?

If we can bring together families who are going through the same difficult time and get them talking and just one family and child benefits from this, then it's worth the effort. All children learn differently but sometimes a hint or tip can help a child who has been stuck trying to learn something.

Tell us about the journey you have been on with Sean. What have you learnt from it that you think other parents and carers may find helpful?

When Sean started school he really struggled. He hated anything to do with reading or writing. At first the school just said he was lazy and he would get it in the end but I knew something was different. It reached the point eventually where I couldn't even get him to look at a page of text or pick

up a pen. At this point alarm bells started ringing and I contacted the school. He started getting 1 to 1 help three times a week and over the last 18 months has come on leaps and bounds. He will always struggle, but he now has methods in place to decode and make sense of what he is reading. It is important to understand that if your child is not learning something in the conventional way, adapt, change and most of all be patient.

What one piece of advice would you give to parents and carers who are not sure where to turn for help?

I found a lot of information on the internet but I would advise any parent to contact the school and try to get a good rapport going with the school. Talking openly with the teachers and TAs can really help.

You're working with your local school to run an information and support session for parents. How did you make that happen?

I just approached the head teacher and asked if she would be interested in helping me! It's not always been plain sailing and I have clashed with the school in the past. Usually because of my own frustration at not being able to help Sean learn as quickly as I want him to. Open and honest conversation has led to a good working relationship and the school support me fully.

What have you found most useful about being in touch with other Parent Champions through our Facebook page?

It's a big step to try and set something like this up but from seeing on the facebook page that there are other parents just as passionate about their children's learning as I am, it gave me the push to do something about it.

Contact Information...

The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust

info@thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk
www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk
01344 381 564

British Dyslexia Association

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Parent Champions

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