

WELCOME

Dear Parent Champions

Well done to all of you who so brilliantly supported Dyslexia Awareness Week this year. Dyslexia has always mattered to us as parents but we often have to remind some doubters out there! I had some heartfelt conversations with parents and professionals during a drop-in session we ran to support the Dyslexia Association of London in their efforts to raise awareness.

It's always encouraging to hear what's working well and how our collective efforts are making a difference. It's been a busy term working with colleagues and planning our future. We look forward to supporting you in the New Year and beyond.



Mel Byrne
Director,
The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust

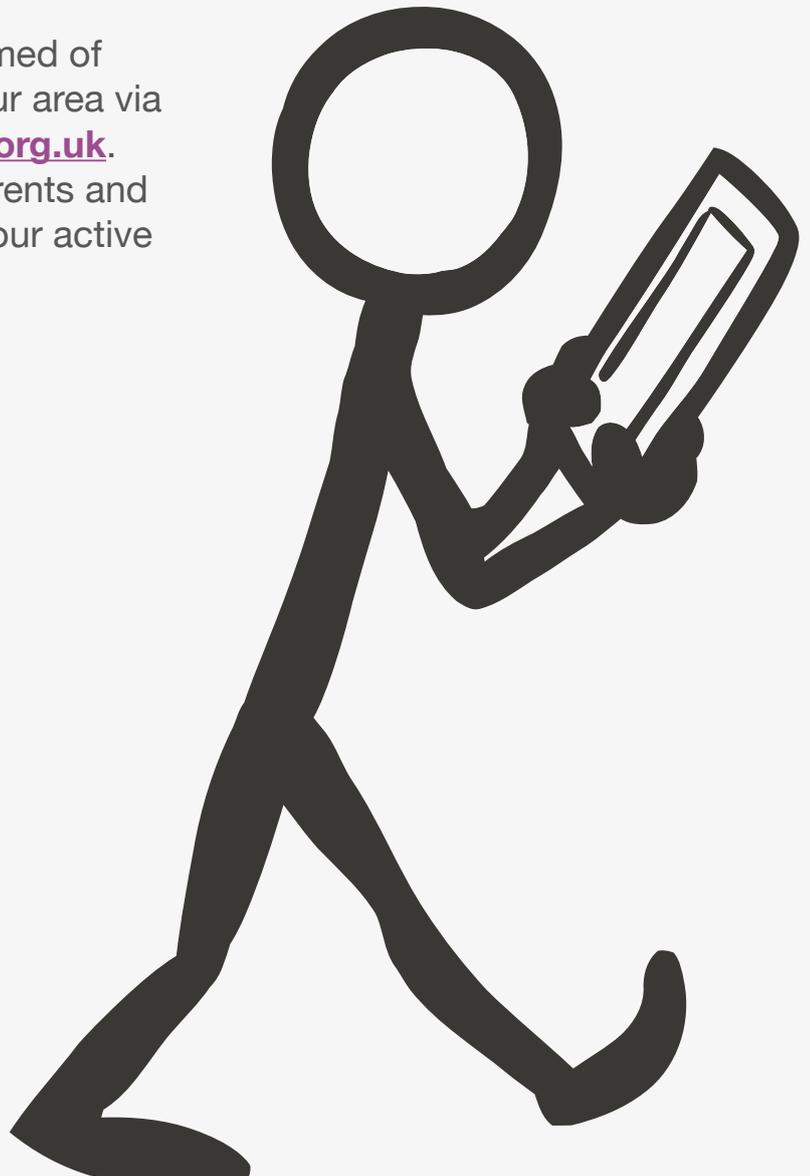
Director's message	1
Get involved	2
Supporting you...	3
Help with...	6
Resources	10
Help and events	13
Get in touch	14



How you can help

The Dyslexia SpLD Trust, through its partners, continues to be at the forefront when it comes to providing information and guidance to parents on all matters affecting children with Dyslexia and SpLD. Resources, guidance and information is published on the Trust website which is regularly updated. [Click here to go to the Trust website.](#)

Please do continue to keep us informed of any events that are happening in your area via email at social@parentchampions.org.uk. We are always keen to hear from parents and to get a real understanding of what our active parent champions are up to.



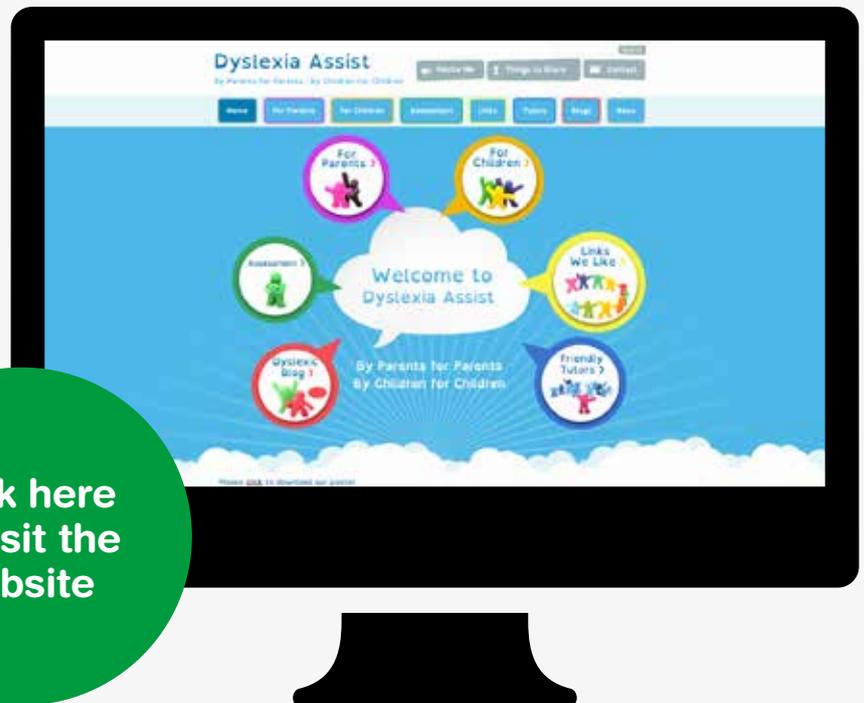
Dyslexia-Assist.org.uk

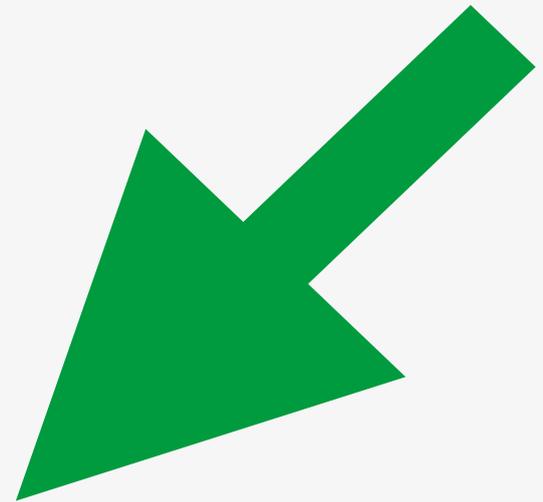
Dyslexia Assist, founded by a group of parents and children who have struggled through the education system, went live in June 2014.

There are plenty of websites which detail how to ‘treat’ or ‘cure’ dyslexia, but none which give really practical help, saying ‘we tried this and it worked well’ or ‘we tried this, it worked with one of our children, but not the other’ it was because of this gap in services we formed Dyslexia Assist.

A key feature of the Dyslexia Assist website is its interactivity. It is written in dyslexic font and has speech-to-text software for use whenever it is needed, there are lots of visual and audio aids to help on the website. For instance, to remember the months of the year, there is an article on how you can use your hands and knuckles to prompt memory as well as using familiar tunes and word association as an aid.

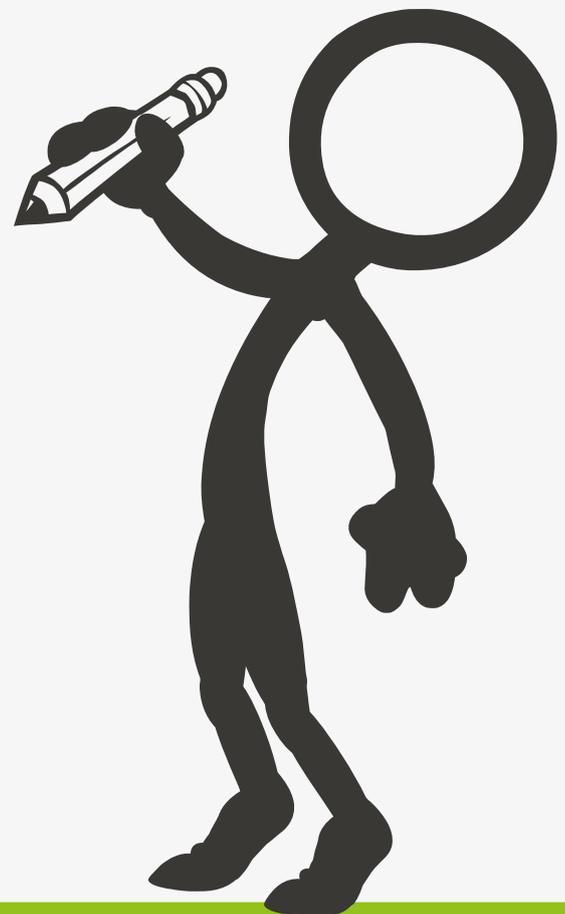
The website also deals with frequently asked questions like: How do I get my child assessed? What will happen in my assessment? How do I cope with tricky words? What should I expect from an assessment?





Founders Lisa and Val discovered that even though their children had been schooled differently, one in the private and one in the public sector, they had both battled with the labels such as 'lazy' and 'ill-disciplined,' attributed by staff who didn't understand the nature of dyslexia in their children.

Val's son Tim described how he found his dyslexia challenging. He said he would sit down to write, look at a blank page, become upset, cry and walk out of the room with frustration. He would ask his teacher additional questions and ask to move to the front of the class which led to people to think he had a hearing problem and might even need glasses. When glasses were prescribed to try and help Tim, he became upset on finding that they were not the magic wand that would enable him to read. However, since being diagnosed after an assessment, he now gets the additional support he needs and is beginning to develop skills to cope with his difficulties. He has even moved up to higher sets in science Maths and English which he is, quite rightly, chuffed about.



A further key aim of the charity is to help parents to find a local suitable tutor. The website lists friendly tutors by location. The way that the listing works is that the tutor asks their tutees to complete a a satisfaction survey questionnaire which children complete using smiley faces. Once 3 or more completed questionnaires are received indicating that the parent and learner feel the tutor to be dyslexia friendly,

the tutor is listed on the website with a smiley face.

Dyslexia Assist is a no shop, no donation, no affiliation registered charity. "Our idea is to share as much information as we can in one central hub so that both parents and children have somewhere to go." You could say we are the web version of a Parent Champion.

Dyslexia Assist needs your help to raise awareness, please download our poster from the website to display, perhaps upload some media from a lesson or homework to the website so children can see their ideas on line which will help other students. With your help Dyslexia Assist will grow and help more people.



You can follow Dyslexia Assist on Facebook and on Twitter @DyslexiaAssist.

If you want more information, would like to add content to the website or have any suggestions please contact us.

Are maths interventions supporting developmental dyscalculia?

Karima Esmail, JellyJames Publishing

Given the wide range of dyslexia screening and interventions that take place within schools, it is now well overdue that all children should be assessed to detect children at risk of dyscalculia and maths difficulties so that purposeful and early intervention can be planned.

There are far too many school children experiencing difficulty with maths, one in 20 children present a neurological disability known as dyscalculia where the developmental component skills of acquiring simple, foundational number skills is immature, reflecting in an undeveloped number sense.

The needs of learners with developmental dyscalculia are radically different to those of children who have difficulty with maths, yet most intervention groups cater for the needs of the latter, being the majority.



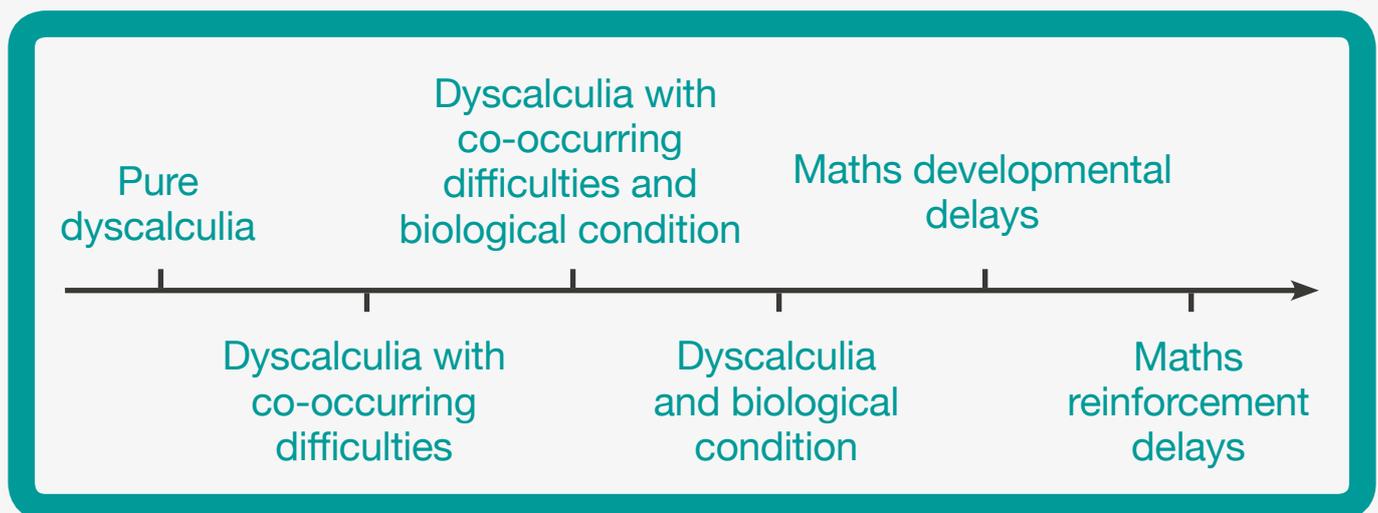
It is likely that children with this condition may also have co-occurring difficulties such as dyslexia, working memory impairments, auditory processing and their difficulty to process simple numbers is further compounded. For some children, this difficulty is further exasperated by their biological conditions such as; Williams Syndrome, Turners Syndrome and Foetal alcohol syndrome where research indicates that they have a strikingly low number sense.

For example, children with dyscalculia often can't tell which queue is shorter at the supermarket. They have

difficulty comparing and estimating and may estimate 30 sweets in a jar as 6. Many have difficult decoding numbers where they misread and some miswrite the numbers, accessing number magnitudes, place value errors and sequencing incorrectly are many such difficulties experienced by these children. At the other end of the spectrum there are children who lack the automaticity and require reinforcement.

Can the number sense of these children be shaped and developed? The simple answer is - Yes it can be repositioned and yes, it is possible to build capacity.

There is a spectrum of maths difficulties



The key is to recognise where a child's difficulties lie, and then understand this within the context of their global functioning. The Dyscalculia Association, the new not-for-profit organisation, is in the early stages of addressing this challenge. Meanwhile, we need to create a broader awareness of dyscalculia among SEN specialists in education and health organisations, and the SEND local offer needs to compliment the offering for numeracy and dyscalculia support.

Dyscalculia is not characterised by one symptom; it presents as a blend of difficulties that are presented differently in every child. The fundamental difficulties are not hard to assess, given the right tools. Having diagnosed where the difficulty lies, practitioners need a multi-modal intervention with a child-centred approach that helps reposition the child's number sense development.

The SENCo and HLTA at Boldmere Primary School worked patiently to bring about changes in the number sense of pupils who have dyscalculia, using Dynamo Profiler (dyscalculia assessment) and Dynamo Maths (dyscalculia Intervention and remediation). Jeannette Rimmer spoke to Sophie Chalmers from Special Children magazine, and commented: "Some children have come on in leaps and bounds and have advanced by three or four sublevels – a few small issues were holding them back and now that they have mastered these, they are just flying."



Karima Esmail is an experienced and respected author of educational books and interactive software. She previously taught as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire and is known for providing literacy and numeracy resources that address the needs of diverse learners. She has developed a world class assessment

and award winning intervention to support learners with developmental dyscalculia. These have been translated into many languages and are being used internationally. Her passion lies in raising awareness of dyscalculia and how neurodevelopmental disorders affect children's number sense development.

Suggestions for areas for next release:

- 1. The evolving understanding of dyscalculia.**
- 2. Assessments informing interventions**
- 3. SEND challenge for dyscalculia**
- 4. Intervention and remediation for dyscalculia**
- 5. The unknown – Dyscalculia in adults and jobs**

Ask an Expert

The Interventions for Literacy factsheets for parents have been updated to reflect current changes in legislation following the SEND Reforms. For example, did you know that your

parent partnership service is now known as IASS or the Information, Advice and Support Service?

[You will find these resources here.](#)

Drive for Literacy

The Drive for Literacy programme is a collaborative project between Driver Youth Trust and the academy network, ARK Schools. The majority of ARK School pupils will learn to read and spell through the Read Write Inc Phonics programme, however, there are a proportion of pupils (nationally up to 10%) for whom reading and spelling accurately and fluently poses a problem – pupils with dyslexia. The Drive for Literacy programme ensures that dyslexia screening and identification of literacy difficulties takes place and is addressed as soon as possible.

The Drive for Literacy website has a great section for Parents looking at what you can do to support your child. [See here for a link to the website.](#)



Website

Following feedback from parents, we have made some changes to the resources section on the website adding updated resources and reorganising the existing ones to improve the user experience. We very much welcome your feedback and comments on these changes.



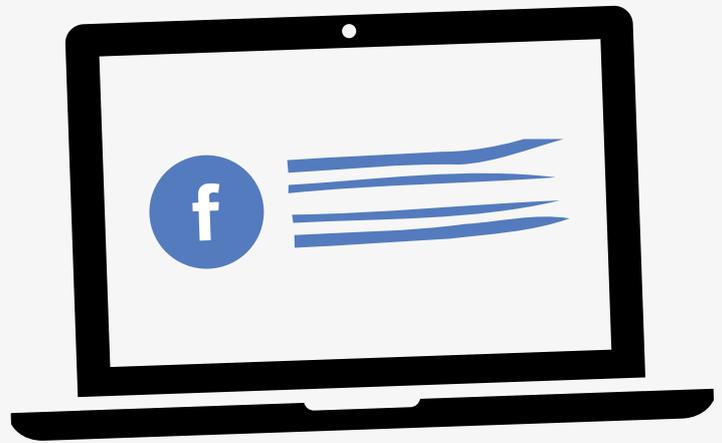
Map of Provision

The Parents Map of Provision is now live; this map will allow you to search for support in your area by typing your town or postcode into the search box. Please [contact us](#) if you would like to be added to the map.

Facebook page

We have been building a new Facebook Page which will replace the group that currently exists. For those of you who are members of the group, you will have noticed that we have invited you to the new page and posted a notice stating that the page is now complete and that the group will be shut down on the 12th of December.

There are many advantages to having a page, we can add events and invite you to them, it makes it easier for people to find and follow Parent Champions, the pictures are clearer and any posts that are added by the Trust are highlighted making them easier for you to find.



Good to talk

If you want to talk to an expert, you can:

- Call the British Dyslexia Association Helpline on **0333 405 456**.
- Arrange a consultation at one of the Dyslexia Action centres or at Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre.
- Full contact details are available at www.parentchampions.org.uk



Events for Parents and Carers

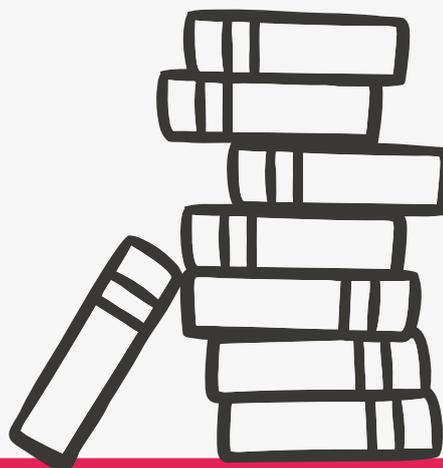
Literacy Sessions at Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire

The British Dyslexia Association is running a series of after school literacy sessions comprised of group literacy teaching with a specialist SpEd teacher and teaching assistants. Each session will cost £15 and is open to all children that experience learning difficulties.

For further information please email julie@bdadyslexia.org.uk putting CrowthorneCWS in the subject header.

Christmas Break

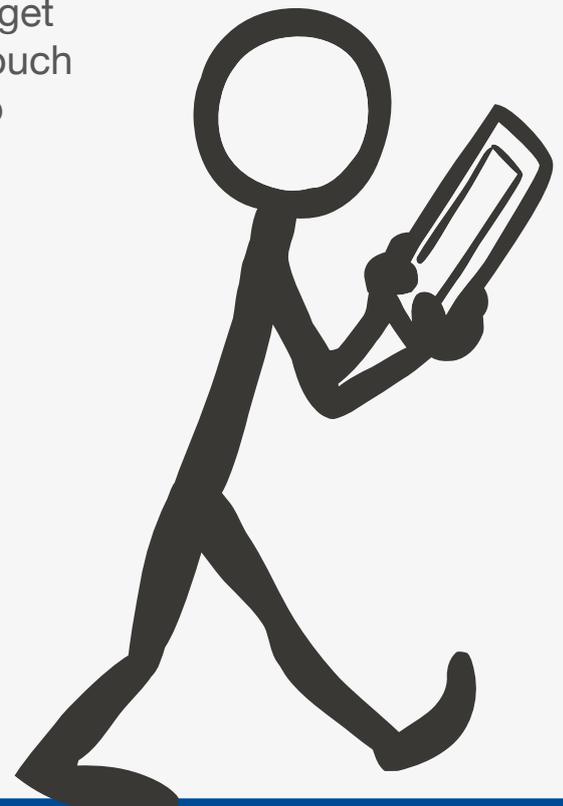
The Trust will be closing their offices for the festive season and we would like to wish all of our Parent Champions a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Your feedback

We'd love to hear your feedback on anything we have discussed in this edition of the newsletter. You can email us at social@parentchampions.org.uk.

Join Parent Champions on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is a fantastic place to share ideas, get and give support and a good way of getting in touch with other Parent Champions in your area and to link up with others from across the country.



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