

Literacy Based Differences & Approaches

Guidance for Parents

Educational Psychology Service

Kathryn Bailey, Senior Educational Psychologist

Learning Support Team

Sian Mitchell & Reina den Hollander, Specialist Teachers

Introduction

The Educational Psychology Service is committed to promoting high standards of literacy for all children and young people (CYP) in the city of Swansea. We believe that all CYP should have access to high-quality, well-differentiated 'quality first' teaching across the curriculum within our schools and settings, as informed by current research and national guidance.

We recognise that some CYP find learning to read and write far more challenging than others, despite high quality opportunities and input. Research highlights the importance of identifying the needs of these individuals early and ensuring that they access a differentiated curriculum to make suitable progress.

We also know that the emotional well-being of CYP experiencing literacy differences is a high priority when promoting more positive outcomes for this group. In Swansea, we are committed to promoting the rights of CYP in our city.

In Swansea, we consider that it is important that we address the needs of all children and young people (CYP) with literacy differences, irrespective of a label or diagnosis. This includes CYP experiencing difficulties in any combination, or all, of the following areas, despite appropriate teaching and evidence-based intervention:

- ❖ **Word reading**
- ❖ **Spelling**
- ❖ **Writing**
- ❖ **Reading comprehension**

In Swansea we recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers and that they have a key role in helping us understand our CYP's strengths and needs and how best to support them.

How can you support your child at home?

The Early Years

It is important to remember that all children develop at different rates. We expect to see similar levels of development in all areas. However, children can be affected by differences in specific areas of their development.

If you have concerns about any aspect of your child's development, it is important to talk to your child's class teacher and/or the ALNCO (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator). The school may then draw up a support plan in discussion with you, if considered necessary, which would be regularly reviewed. It can be helpful to share any relevant information relating to your child, such as a family history of learning difference, significant life events, general health, visual or hearing difficulties. This will enable those who are working with your child to have as full an understanding of your child's strengths and needs as possible.

Quality time in the early years is invaluable in developing your child's language skills and helping your child understand their world. This can help your child develop literacy skills.

As a parent/carer you can:

- Share stories, songs, poems, and books with your child.
- Look at picture books with your child.
- Teach and enjoy nursery rhymes together.
- Perform action songs with your child.
- Play games with your child which strengthen memory skills such as I spy and matching pairs.
- Practice sequencing skills, e.g. going through what you did that day.
- Play counting games with your child and fun board games that involve turn taking.
- Encourage your child to play simple ball games such as catching, throwing and kicking,
- Encourage the use of construction style toys such as Duplo, Lego

- Talk with and listen to your child whilst out doing everyday activities.
- Involve your child in activities that will encourage them to extend and use language such as cooking, shopping and gardening
- Lay clothes out the right way round and in the correct order for dressing to help with sequencing.
- Consider using visual cues or labels in the home
- Engage in outdoor and messy play.
- Access community playgroups, where available.
- Visit the local library and look out for events such as rhyme time

School Age Children and Young People

Organisation

Difficulties with organisation can affect many aspects of school and home life. As parents, there are things you can do to help your child at home which will support your child and develop their independence:

- Task chart / 'to do' list on wall.
- Pack their bag the night before school. Do this together with younger children.
- Model and encourage organisation of possessions.
- Encourage your child to put items, such as PE kit, back in their place to avoid 'losing' things. Sometimes, labelling can help with this.
- Regular routines are helpful including a consistent bedtime and tech free time.
- Use colour coding in diaries and calendars.

Time Keeping

You may find your child has trouble with time keeping.

- A digital watch can be helpful.
- A digital watch or watch/phone with an alarm can be helpful to help with reminders.
- Allow extra time to prepare and get ready for transitions.
- Visuals can help such as calendars, count down sheets and digital calendars.

Learning

Literacy difficulties can have an impact on learning at school and home. Here are some ideas to support learning at home.

- Spend time discussing a story that you are reading as some children learn to read mechanically and are concentrating so hard on decoding that they are not able to concentrate on the actual story.
- Find out what text your child is reading or studying with their class and consider finding this as an audiobook to listen to
- Communicate with school if more differentiated tasks would be helpful, perhaps adopting a 'must, should, could' approach.
- Play games that involve auditory memory such as Kim's game or 'I went to the shop' – these can be played on journeys.
- Use all senses when learning spellings, it can be fun to use sand, play doh, glitter or shaving foam.
- When learning key words or vocabulary, consider placing them in places that your child visits around the house such as the fridge door, bathroom mirror, TV remote!
- Use magnetic or wooden letters when learning new words and sometimes muddle them up deliberately to see if your child can spot the mistakes.
- Use your child's interest to encourage reading – this could be using books/comics/magazines/website about a topic of interest.
- Try to find songs on YouTube that help you learn about a new topic.
- Make up funny mnemonics to remember spellings.
- When writing more creatively, encourage the flow of ideas over correct spelling. Sometimes writing as your child dictates a story to you can help. Grammar and spelling can be looked at later.

Homework

Many parents talk about the challenges they have with their children completing homework. Although the importance of homework is highlighted, it is important to remember that home should be a place your child can relax. Don't let homework time become stressful. Put yourself in your child's position and try to be as patient as possible.

- Short bursts of activity, such as 5 or 10 minutes at a time, dependent on the age of your child, are better than expecting your child to concentrate for longer periods of time.
- Work on tasks together, taking turns – even doing deals to encourage participation (I read a paragraph, you read a paragraph)
- For older children, go through your child's homework diary every day – it may be that your child is struggling to remember what they have to do. School can do lots of things which can help children complete their homework diaries or planners.
- Some children will have issues with writing so they may need their parent/carer to help them write things down.
- Using a computer/laptop can be helpful and looking for different ways of recording information e.g. mind maps, flow charts, symbols, bullet points.
- Consider using Microsoft Onenote, Microsoft immersive reader or Crick Software Clicker or DocsPlus
- Ask class teacher if some homework tasks can be submitted in an alternative form such as a cartoon, drawing, piece of art, voice note or video. Most teachers are open to creative responses to a task.

Emotional Well Being

As parents/carers you have a really important role in building your child's confidence and self-esteem. Children with literacy differences can often think negatively about themselves and may have low self-esteem. So, it's really important we do everything we can to support their wellbeing.

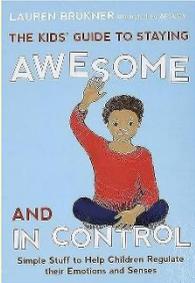
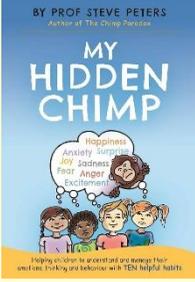
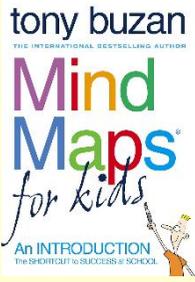
- Try not to get anxious yourself - your child will pick up on this.
- Speak to class teacher or Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) if you feel your child is struggling in class or with homework or if they are worried.
- Schedule in quiet time or time to blow off steam if needed.

- Ensure that you allow up to 10 seconds for your child to process information and to construct a response.
- Ensure that you chunk information and avoid giving too many instructions in one go.
- Focus on strengths and find opportunities to demonstrate success.
- Allow extra time to complete tasks but be prepared to 'draw the line' if a task is causing distress or is taking an unreasonable amount of time.
- Consider using a visual reward chart to work towards a treat and ensure success is possible.
- Be careful how you word suggestions for improvement. Perhaps use phrases such as 'I wonder if we could...', 'How about trying...', 'shall we try adding...', 'this could be even better if...'
- Encourage and praise at all opportunities. Aim towards 4 positive comments to any 1 less positive comment.
- Play to your child's strengths with learning e.g. if they prefer to look at pictures, use computers or video clips for learning - if they like to listen, use audio books.
- It is very important to build self-esteem and develop confidence - find your child's strengths and encourage them in activities they enjoy / are good at e.g. sport, art, music, swimming etc
- Get involved in active, creative, outdoor activities including clubs.
- Visit the library and look out for events.
- Encourage your child to understand that it is ok to make mistakes and model ways to cope if you make a mistake.
- Find out about role models that also have literacy differences – lots of examples can be found on the 'Made by Dyslexia' website.

Remember that every child is different, and some strategies will work better with some children and young people than others.

When you find an effective strategy, consistency is key.

Useful resources:

	<p>Brokner, L; The kids guide to staying awesome and in control.</p>
	<p>Peters, S; My hidden chimp.</p>
	<p>Buzan, T; Mindmaps for kids.</p>

<p>Inclusive Classroom</p>  <p>Reading Writing Math Communication</p>	<p>Microsoft Learning Tools.</p>
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Social media:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Dyslexia Association • Dyslexia ideas • Made by dyslexia • Dyslexia inspired • The dyslexia classroom • The literacy nest • Clever classroom • Imagination tree • Crick software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I CAN network Ltd • Nessy • ELKLAN • Mike Gershon • Callscotland.org.uk • Integrated learning strategies • Inspired treehouse • Patoss ltd • West Wales Dyslexia Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OneNote education • Widgeit software • Dyslexic advantage • Dyslexia guild • OT toolbox • Sprinkle of salt • Mrs Speechie P • Year 3 and me |
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Hi-Lo (Higher interest Lower ability reading) book series

[Reading Planet Astro: High/Low books for struggling KS2 readers \(risingstars-uk.com\)](#)

[Dyslexic and Reluctant Readers - Barrington Stoke](#)

[High/Low: Bloomsbury Publishing \(UK\)](#)