

## Suggestions to support learning of spelling for dyslexic individuals

### Learning routines and focus

- Have a predictable after-school routine: Allow at least 30 minutes of rest or play before homework begins.
- Plan for short, focused bursts (5–20 minutes depending on age) followed by movement or relaxation breaks.
- Notice signs of fatigue: If your child is visibly tired or overstimulated after school, shift homework to later or break it into smaller chunks.
- Use calm, low-distraction spaces: Soft lighting, minimal noise and a clear desk will help your child's focus.
- Encourage verbal rehearsal: Let your child talk through what they want to write or learn before putting it on paper.
- Use organisers or visual timetables to help plan tasks and track progress.

### Wellbeing and confidence

- Prioritise decompression time after school. Your child expends significant effort during the day; quiet time or preferred activities (music, reading aloud together, crafts) will help them reset.
- Older children who must study for longer should take regular breaks during study. Every 20 minutes stand up, stretch or do something physical.
- Acknowledge effort, not just results. Praise persistence, creativity and self-correction ("You noticed that didn't look right: that's great awareness").
- Build in success experiences (activities your child enjoys and finds easy) to balance the challenge of reading and writing tasks.
- Encourage self-advocacy: Help your child to practise explaining, "It helps me if I can listen first" or "Can I have a bit more time to finish this?"
- Mindfulness or gentle exercise (e.g. walking, yoga, breathing exercises) can help manage anxiety and sensory overload.
- Promote adequate rest and hydration – tiredness strongly affects focus and emotional regulation.

## Multisensory learning ideas for English and additional languages

*Share this list with your child. Ask which ideas they would like to try. Trial one or two at a time. Change when your child feels they are not working as well as another might.*

- Use multisensory learning: Pair spoken words with actions, pictures or gestures. For example:
  - Act out verbs, label household objects in the target language, or use colour-coded flashcards for gender or tense.
  - Encourage your child to write with their finger in sand, salt or shaving foam. Say each letter aloud as they trace it, then sweep the word away and try again from memory.
  - Paint the word in large letters on a sheet of paper or pavement with a brush and water/paint (big movements help strengthen muscle memory).
  - Build the word with magnetic or wooden letters, then mix them up and rebuild it without looking at the model.
  - Colour-code tricky parts. Write each word using different colours for vowel patterns, endings or silent letters.
  - Create word art by turning the letters of a spelling word into a picture that shows what the word means (e.g. the word 'mountain' shaped like a hill).
  - Clap or step the syllables in the word as your child says them; then write one syllable per clap to make longer words easier to manage.
  - Say it the funny way. Exaggerate tricky spellings aloud ("Wed-nes-day", "bus-i-ness") (humour helps make it stick).
  - Record your child spelling the word while writing it in the air with their finger, then watch and check together.
  - Use rhythm and music. For example, tap out each letter on a drum, table or knees while spelling aloud or make up a tune for longer words.
  - Invent a silly sentence where each word starts with the next letter in the spelling (e.g. **b**ig **e**lephants **c**an **a**lways **u**nderstand **s**mall **e**lephants for "because").
  - Hide word cards around the house; each time your child finds one, they spell it aloud and says what it means.
  - Display a key word in several notable places around the house (bathroom mirror, front door, fridge door) so they are seen several times during the day. Change the word only when it can be spelt fluently.
  - Write words on card in glue and sprinkle with sand or rice. When dry, your child can trace the raised letters with their finger while saying them aloud.

- Write the word backwards with your child's non-dominant hand or in a mirror (novelty helps memory).
- Arrange small objects (beads, pasta, pebbles) into the shapes of letters and take a photo to display as a "word poster."
- Word relay: take turns writing one letter each of a word. Say it together as it builds.
- Use new spelling words to write short, funny sentences or mini-stories rather than copying lists.
- Play "spot the pattern." Collect groups of words with the same ending (e.g. light, night, bright) and decorate them on coloured paper to display together.
- Build sound awareness first: Encourage listening to short audio clips, songs or rhymes before reading or writing new words. This helps strengthen phonological links.
- Learn small sets of 3 – 5 words at a time, focusing on meaning and pronunciation before spelling.
- Chant, clap or step out syllables in tricky words (rhythm supports memory).
- When learning an additional language, link languages together: When possible, talk about how words in English are similar or different in sound or structure (this strengthens metalinguistic awareness).
- Encourage spaced repetition: Revisit new vocabulary little and often (e.g. a few minutes a day) rather than long sessions.
- Let writing follow speaking: Practise saying phrases aloud confidently before writing them down to reduce spelling load.
- Celebrate partial success: If your child remembers the meaning but not the spelling, praise the understanding first. Accuracy will come later.