



Learning at Home During the Pandemic

Some Helpful Advice for Parents and Carers of Children with Specific Learning Difficulties such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia or Dyscalculia

Spending time at home and supporting children in these times of uncertainty can be challenging for everyone. Schools are supplying a variety of home learning materials and have given information to parents and carers about how to access and complete this work. The Pembrokeshire Early Help Team have compiled this resource to provide some support and strategies to help in these times of distance learning. We hope you will find them useful.

Routines

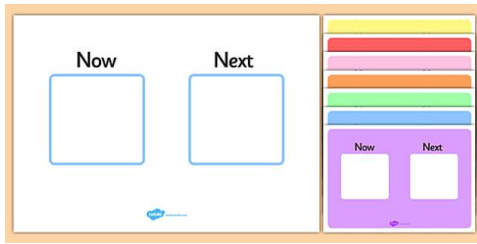
Children find it reassuring to have a routine. It may be helpful for you to continue with the normal pattern – for example working Monday to Friday during the day and have time off from school work on the weekend. It may also be useful to set up a working area and having a clear structure to the day, including break times.

Visual Planning

Using a Visual planner and a visual structure will be helpful for many children with SpLD. Younger children may benefit from using a calendar like the ones below. These visuals will help them understand where they are in the week or month and the tasks they have to complete.



A Now and Next Board can also be useful and simplifies the requests. You can add a reward.



Older children may prefer to use tick lists, post it notes or white boards to structure the day or small work tasks.



Learning at home

Schools have given guidance for parents on completing work at home. You may be using HWB, Google Classroom or something different. Some children on the spectrum may find learning from home difficult. Your role from parent/carer to teacher will be strange for both you and your child. **Remember you are doing the best you can in these very strange and worrying circumstances. Be kind to yourself.** To begin with, spend some time together completing some fun activities. This could help your child understand that you are going to be there to help and work with them.

Supporting Reading

Keep it fun and try not to expect too much, so that even if your child finds reading challenging, they should still be happy to have a go and not feel anxious. It's always good to start with what they know first to improve confidence. Try just looking at the pictures first, or the front cover and ask them to talk about what they think the book might be about.

Give plenty of praise and let your child know that you realise how hard they are trying. Try saying things like "Well done! You broke that word down and sounded it out really well."

Be ready to give help at the right time so that they don't panic. Try giving hints at first to help, such as "what is the first sound?" Always stop for a break when your child is showing signs that they have had enough.

Include reading into everyday activities by encouraging your child to read information on things like board games/toys, food packaging, street signs, supermarkets, recipes etc.

Using audio books, either CDs, BBC Sounds app or by downloading books onto your devices allows your child to hear books, so that they can benefit from exposure to the language and the vocabulary which books can provide. 'Quick Reads' books are great for reluctant older readers. <https://readingagency.org.uk/young-people/>

Getting ready for writing

Young children – make it multi-sensory:

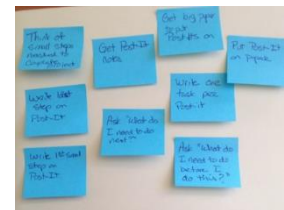


Sand tray, chalk board or white board & marker pens, Playdough letters, large size paper & chunky crayons. Practise activities that require fine motor skills e.g. bead threading, peg boards, cutting and sticking, to get hands ready for writing.

Writing Strategies For older children

Help your child to organise their ideas:

- Bullet points – can be expanded on later
- Timeline – to aid sequencing
- Post-It notes – great for ‘hands-on’ learners and can be moved around to organise / sequence
- Record answers verbally or in a ‘cartoon strip’ and then write / type up
- Use technology such as spell checker, predictive text or a note taker app to help with writing production. ‘Read aloud’ functions can also be useful to help with proofreading



Encourage your child to ask for spellings & **always write them down** – help them think of ways to remember them (the funnier the better e.g. ‘sin’ in ‘business, ‘island’ ‘is land’)

Spelling Strategies

Make it multi-sensory. Using a variety of senses will help your child to remember spellings. Use the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check spelling method as shown here

Let children make up their own reminders – the funnier the better!

Say it how it **looks** - pronounce the silent letters e.g. scissors

Memory aids e.g. brainy elephants can add up sums easily

 <p>LOOK</p>	<p>Look at the word. How many parts are there? What are the tricky bits? Can you find any spelling patterns?</p>
 <p>SAY</p>	<p>Say the word to yourself. Break the word into syllables. How many parts are there? What sounds can you hear?</p>
 <p>COVER</p>	<p>Cover up the word so you cannot see it. Picture the word in your mind.</p>
 <p>WRITE</p>	<p>Write down the word, remembering how it sounds and what it looks like.</p>
 <p>CHECK</p>	<p>Check to see if it is correct. Tick the letters you got correct. Write the word correctly if you made any mistakes.</p>

Memory Strategies

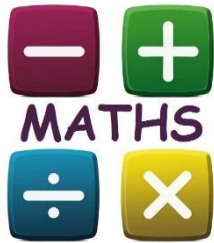
People with SpLD often think in pictures. Make use of this ability by encouraging them to picture the thing you want them to remember. Give no more than two instructions at a time.

e.g. put your coat on the hook then take off your shoes. To make it more memorable ask your child to repeat it back to you while they picture the



action. Reinforce learning with actions and multisensory activities 'See it. Hear it. Say it. Do it.'

Supporting Maths



Give real life examples whenever you can to demonstrate maths concepts e.g. using Lego bricks or coins for counting, or cutting a cake or pizza into portions to illustrate fractions. Encourage your child to help with things like cooking using weighing and measuring.

Use children's games to work on numbers such as 'Ooky Spooky', Connect 4, dominoes, board games such as Snakes and Ladders.

Use the language used in maths e.g. 'the same, more than, less than, how many more. Sometimes there is more than one word for the same thing which can be confusing e.g. 'subtract', 'take away', 'minus'. Make sure your child understands what the question is asking them to do.

Short, regular activities that you can do with your child to improve confidence when they go back to school

Sequencing activities e.g. cooking dinner, getting ready for bed "what do we need to do first?" "What comes next?"

Practise ball games at home. Start with a simple game of catch with a large ball and gradually work on from there once they have confidence e.g. go on to throwing skills, using a smaller ball, or introducing other players into the game.

Show your child how to hold a bat or racket correctly by placing their hands in the correct way for them. If you just show them by doing it yourself, they may find it difficult to mirror what you are doing. This also applies to skills such as **tying shoe laces**.

Practise using everyday tools such as scissors and glue sticks. Encourage your child to make a scrap book, by cutting out pictures and news clippings about their favourite interests.

Show your child how to fold away their clothes / put them on hangers, tidy things away. Gradually let them do these activities alone and reward them for doing it by themselves.



Movement and Learning – many children with SpLD can find it difficult to remember things they learn in school such as spelling rules or their multiplication tables. Rhyme and movement can aid learning as well as making learning fun. BBC Super Movers is an excellent on-line resource for learning to movement and song for Foundation Phase and for Maths English and Science for Key Stage 2.

Staying in Contact – You can help your child to stay in touch with their friends. You could use social media, apps like Skype or Face time, Messenger and email to stay connected with family and friends. Writing in this way can also help to improve your child’s typing ability as well as encouraging them to use functions such as the spell checker.

Screen Time – this can be added to the daily timetable and also be used as a reward/reinforcer. It could be useful to make some screen time rules and set boundaries for every ones screen time at home.

Useful Links:

CBBC: Video and Questions about Coronavirus

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089>

Dyslexia

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children/how-can-i-support-my-child>

Pembrokeshire Inclusion Service site resources and information for SpLD

<https://resources.pembsinclusion.service.wales/resources/>

Dyspraxia

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/daily-life/>

Dyscalculia

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/schools-colleges-and-universities/dyscalculia.html>

How to encourage writing

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/howtohelpenglish>

<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-write-story-a-30593.html>