

Developing Oral Language Skills in your Child

Dyslexia can be defined as a difficulty in transferring language to thought (reading and listening) and in transferring thought to language (speaking and writing). Supporting reading and writing is a crucial part of teaching a child with dyslexia, but we must also foster the language skills of speaking and listening.

Parents can help with this informally throughout the day.

- Read stories or information to your child which is of *interest to them* but at a high reading level - and discuss what you read.
- Ask your child to recall the main points of a film or T.V. programme they have seen - encourage them to discuss plot, character, setting etc. (Why? Who? Where?)
- Discuss the events of the day over your evening meal - allow your child to choose a topic of conversation and take an interest in their contribution.
- Model / encourage turn-taking and listening to other people's opinions.
- Ask questions which require more than a Yes/No response.
- Model / encourage your child to enter a conversation at an appropriate time.
- Provide the real word for their substitutions such as "thing" or "yoke".
- Encourage them to guess word meanings and use the dictionary to see who is the closest.
- Encourage use of eye contact and gesture.
- Play oral word games such as "I spy", "Twenty questions" or "Finish the sentence"
- Debate the pros and cons of various issues e.g. uniforms in schools.
- Encourage clear, articulate speech.
- Encourage listening to stories on CD