



# Dyslexia and OT

*“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.” Mr. Rogers*

## What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a difference in how the brain processes language, and it can make reading, spelling, and writing more challenging.

## What could Dyslexia look like for your child?

While every child is different, there are some common themes among children with dyslexia, below are a list of common areas where they may be affected:

- **Reading Challenges:** Your child may find it hard to sound out words, read fluently, or even understand what they've read.
- **Writing and Spelling:** Spelling can be tricky, and written sentences might feel unorganised, incoherent, or messy.
- **Language Processing:** They might struggle to understand spoken instructions, and in turn they may also find it hard to articulate their own words.
- **Memory and Focus:** Short-term memory might be affected, making it harder to follow steps or remember details.
- **Frustration and Anxiety:** Low confidence, anxiety, or frustration can happen if your child feels they're not keeping up with their friends, or falling behind in school.

## Vision and Dyslexia

Vision affects dyslexia by making it harder to process text smoothly and accurately. Challenges such as slow visual processing, being able to track words and letters, and visual-spatial issues can disrupt reading, cause confusion between letters, and this can lead to eye strain.

- **Visual Tracking:** Dyslexia can affect smooth eye movement across text, causing skipped lines or mixed-up letters.
- **Visual-Spatial Issues:** Difficulties with spatial orientation can lead to letter reversals and alignment problems. It can also make focussing on letters with a heavy background more difficult.
- **Visual Memory:** Trouble with visual memory affects word recognition and spelling.
- **Visual Crowding:** Letters appearing close together can slow reading and cause confusion.



## Strategies to support children with Dyslexia

- **Reading Support:** Mix it up - Use multi-sensory programs. Read together and use audiobooks to improve their comprehension.
- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Try breaking tasks into smaller, manageable steps and giving clear, simple instructions. Remember to allow regular breaks to help your child stay calm and avoid frustration.
- **Use Assistive Technology:** There are “speech-to-text” apps that will help with documenting their thoughts a little easier. Audiobooks can also be handy tools to encourage a love of reading.
- **Celebrate Every Win:** No matter how small, every success deserves a big cheer. And remember to encourage their strengths and interests outside of reading.
- **Collaborate with Teachers and Specialists:** Create a partnership with the school and the teachers. Invite open communication between yourselves, the teachers and any other specialists in the mix. Teamwork makes dreamwork.
- **Work with an Occupational Therapist:** Many paediatric occupational therapists have training in vision tracking, and may be able to recommend seeing a specialist optometrist if they notice a concern. Occupational therapists are experienced in working with interoception. They can work alongside your child in understanding how to manage their frustrations and developing their confidence. The more confident the child, the more likely they are to overcome their hurdles.
- **Be Patient and Positive:** Show empathy, praise efforts, and remember to reassure them it's okay to struggle sometimes.

CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA ARE  
FREQUENTLY OBSERVANT, GOOD PROBLEM  
SOLVERS, HAVE STRONG NARRATIVE  
REASONING AND CAN DEMONSTRATE  
THREE DIMENSIONAL THINKING. .

