

# Dyslexia – A Leaflet for Parents

This leaflet has been devised by Silkeborg Municipality's Knowledge Centre for Language and Reading to provide parents of dyslexic pupils with general knowledge about: dyslexia; the municipality's use of assistance programmes; and ideas for how a parent can support their dyslexic child.

## This leaflet will tell you all about

Dyslexia .....	2
Signs and symptoms .....	2
Reading.....	3
Assistive technology .....	4
Nota – a digital library .....	4
Support of dyslexic pupils by the school.....	5
What the school expects of parents.....	6
Homework .....	6
The importance of parental support.....	7
The child must remember.....	7
More information .....	7

## Dyslexia

Dyslexia is caused by difficulty in dividing words into single sounds (phonemes) and in getting single sounds to merge into syllables and words. The rules for writing linguistic sounds using letters are also referred to as the alphabetic principle. Difficulties with the alphabetic principle result in the following indications of dyslexia:

- Numerous reading errors, contrary to the sounds of the letters
- Difficulty reading new words
- Long-term spelling difficulties

It is also important to remember that these persistent decoding difficulties can lead to challenges in terms of what you are reading. This is often due to slow, inaccurate reading, a small vocabulary and less experience of reading and understanding different types of text.

Dyslexia is a disability that is evident in different degrees and with different strengths and challenges. Being dyslexic does not mean that you cannot learn to read or spell words, but that it is a challenge for you to make the skills automatic and thereby become a quick, confident reader and writer. Dyslexia is expressed in varying degrees.

Both national and international surveys reveal that between 5% and 7% of the world's population have difficulties with written language as a result of dyslexia.

For more information, visit: [Emu.dk](http://Emu.dk)

## Signs and symptoms

The main signs/symptoms of dyslexia are difficulties with reading, spelling and written wording. Dyslexics find it difficult to translate letters into sounds, and sounds into letters. These difficulties mean that dyslexics take more time to read and write. The difficulty of reading and writing varies from person to person.

Dyslexics find it particularly difficult to read and spell words that they do not know, or that they have neither read nor spelled before. Dyslexics may also have problems with reading comprehension, spoken language and vocabulary.

Some dyslexic pupils can be trained to read age-appropriate texts, but it takes hard work and reading speed will always be reduced, which means they may not

comprehend what they are reading. Frequently, dyslexic pupils also have persistent spelling problems.

Early on in their schooling, it is possible to investigate whether a pupil is at risk of developing dyslexia, and efforts can be made with a view to reducing the difficulties. However, it is impossible to conclude whether a child is dyslexic until the end of the 3rd form.

You cannot get rid of your dyslexia, but the difficulties can be offset by the use of reading and writing technology, training and teaching. With the appropriate support and assistance, much of the dyslexia can be counteracted. Thereby, dyslexic pupils can do well at school and thrive in the education system.

## Reading

Reading can be compared to standing on two feet – conventional reading and listening reading.

**Conventional reading** (reading with the eyes) involves training a child's decoding skills. Children can practise this decoding themselves by reading books appropriate to their current reading level. The school can help find suitable books for this purpose.

In the case of conventional reading, a parent can support their child by listening to them reading. If the child comes across a word they cannot read by themselves, you can allow the child to try by themselves or read the word for the child, so the child can continue reading the sentence. It is important to bear in mind that the child should be able to read the text/book with approximately 92-95% accuracy. In other words, the child must not get stuck too many times. If the book is too difficult, find one at an easier level.

While the recommendation is for children to read at home every day, at times it may be necessary to read more or less. If necessary, you can supplement conventional reading with listening reading, as conventional reading requires a lot of energy on the part of a dyslexic child.

The other 'reading foot' is **listening-reading (reading with the ears)**. In this case, a child can listen-read texts/books that feature age-appropriate themes, interests etc. Listening-reading boosts a child's vocabulary, providing not only a better experience of reading, but also better reading comprehension, given that the child's resources can be used to understand the text rather than decode the words.

Parents can support listening reading by asking children about what they have read: for example, what happened to the main character today? Where did the action take place? What was it about? What was the most exciting thing you read today?

## Assistive technology

A dyslexic is entitled to compensatory aids. In Silkeborg Municipality, this consists of a computer with a reading-aloud and word-suggestion programme and the option of converting speech to text. Dyslexics are also entitled to have digital text, so they can read it aloud with a reading-aloud programme.

In Silkeborg Municipality, their UNI username provides all pupils with access to compensatory programmes/assistive reading-writing technology.

Dyslexic pupils receive assistance to help them start using the programmes – either from the school’s reading counsellor/IT lawyer or from the pupil’s own teachers. The assistive reading/writing technology has some basic features for pupils to use, but the specific use of the technology will always be based on discussion with the individual subject teacher.

### The basic features

Reading aloud	Word suggestion	Speech-to-text	Scanning and Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
			
<p>A read-aloud programme can read text aloud when the text is in digital form.</p>	<p>Word suggestion helps to spell words by making suggestions based on the letters that are written.</p>	<p>Speech-to-text provides the option of speaking to a device, which then writes it down.</p>	<p>Scanning and OCR make it possible to transfer the text to digital form, which can then, for example, be read aloud.</p>

## Nota – a digital library

Nota is a library and knowledge centre that provides audio books and e-books for dyslexics etc. Nota has fiction, non-fiction, text books, newspaper articles and digital comics, and for primary-school use a number of scanned textbooks, assignment books and primers in PDF format.

With your consent, the school will enrol your child in Nota. Once your child is a member of Nota, they will receive a temporary password for Nota's digital library. The password will be sent to the email address provided on the registration form. Your child's membership is valid for life.

Becoming a member of Nota, using the library's books and other provisions are all free.

To find books on Nota, visit: <https://nota.dk/>

Your child must log in with a user number and password or UNI username. Your child can download or play Nota's audiobooks on a computer or listen to the books on a tablet or smartphone. Nota's app, Nota Bibliotek, makes it easy for your child to listen to audiobooks and can be downloaded for both iOS and Android.

## Support of dyslexic pupils by the school

### It is the responsibility of the school:

- To provide updated PC/software for a pupil's computer
- To register the pupil with Nota
- To introduce the pupil to assistive reading/writing technology
- To ensure that all materials are digitally available before teaching.
- To ensure that the school's teaching staff have knowledge of dyslexia and the educational use of assistive reading/writing technology.
- To provide school/home cooperation, if necessary, with an action plan for the dyslexic pupil.
- To provide **dyslexia-friendly teaching** in class: for example,
  - Having expectations for dyslexic students when using their digital tools (reading aloud, word suggestion, speech-to-text and OCR)
  - To have on-going discussions with the pupil about the use of assistive technology and learning strategies
  - Supporting cognition, mindset and self-esteem - through student networks, for instance
  - Making sure that the assistive technology is working properly in test/exam situations

### Primary school tests

Dyslexic pupils can take final primary school exams on special terms. In other words, dyslexic pupils are entitled to extra time for tests and exams in primary school and may, in principal, use the aids they use in everyday life.

It is the school's responsibility to know about the special terms for primary school tests/exams and to prepare the pupils accordingly.

Not all dyslexics are the same, so needs may also differ from pupil to pupil. The head of the school is responsible to conduct an overall assessment of the needs of the individual student. The assessment is conducted in collaboration with the pupil, parents and teachers.

## What the school expects of parents

You are expected to get in touch with the school, if you have any questions and/or feel uncertain about your child's teaching. You can contact your child's teachers, the school's reading tutor or the head of the school.

In addition, it is the responsibility of parents:

- To participate in school/home collaboration and the preparation of an action plan, if necessary.
- To legitimise and support the use of reading-writing technology, given that in the long term this will enable the dyslexic pupil to pursue their dreams of further education.
- To support both conventional and digital (listening-reading) reading development according to the child's needs.
- To hold constant discussions with the child about how they feel and what they think about dyslexia. If necessary, see: [Nota](#)

## Homework

Talk to the school about what to do about homework. It may be a good idea to make specific agreements about homework expectations.

If your child has reading homework for Danish, history or other text-based subjects, it may be a good idea for them to listen to the texts, since 'reading with the eyes' may make your child tired more quickly. Listening-reading and agreements about

homework can provide greater focus on content and on understanding what is being read.

The amount of homework should be reasonable. What makes sense differs from pupil to pupil. The agreements made with the school may appear in your child's action plan, so everyone knows the expectations and the agreement.

## The importance of parental support

It is crucial for parents to cooperate with the school about their child's difficulties with, participation in and benefits from the teaching.

You are encouraged to:

- Follow up on the agreements you made together with the school.
- Inquire how your child has used their assistive reading and writing technology in different subjects.
- Act as role models who also read books. What you read is not as important as simply reading.
- Make sure that dyslexia does not play too big a role in the child's everyday life and leisure time. Focus more on the child's strengths and skills.

## The child must remember

- To make it clear if they need help and support.
- To participate actively in teaching and use the assistive reading and writing technology (both at school and at home).
- To participate in any student networks and be open about dyslexia.
- To accept that reading and writing are hard work, but also to remember all the things they are good at.

## More information

*Ordblindhed – en håndbog til forældre*  
Andreasen, K. & Jandorf, B. D. (2013). Special-pædagogisk Forlag.

*Skal jeg fortælle dig om ordblindhed?*  
Hultquist, A. M. (2015). Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.

Note - a digital library for dyslexics etc. Here you can find newsletters and guides for parents:

Nota: [Nota - Forældreguide](#)

Ordblindhed.dk is a website that provides knowledge about how to support your dyslexic child:

[Ordblindhed.dk](#)

Inspired by the dyslexia leaflet published by Horsens Municipality