

Parents

A mother, in particular, is often very perceptive about her own child, and may well have had the feeling before formal school starts that "things were not quite right". All too often, when she has attempted to express these feelings, she has met with comments such as, "Don't worry. Don't expect too much. He will catch up". At worst she may be labelled fussy, pushy, or over anxious. The mother's comments should always be listened to and her concerns taken seriously.

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"The Dyslexia Handbook, 1997"

North Warwickshire & Coventry Dyslexia
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NORTH WARWICKSHIRE & COVENTRY
DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

GAMES & ACTIVITIES
for the
DYSLEXIC CHILD

by

Jean Augur

Introduction

Many parents feel left out of the teaching process, especially with the dyslexic child. However, there are many ways in which you can help your child. Below are a series of activities based on work that originally appeared in the Jean Augur booklet "Early Help, Better Future". Many of these games may also be used at school for individuals and groups.

General Activities

1. Say nursery rhymes together. These seemed to go out of fashion for a while, but fortunately have had a revival. They are part of our history and heritage and help to encourage rhythm and rhyme at an early age.
2. Finger play.
3. Read poetry to children, especially amusing or nonsense poems. Try making up jingles and limericks together.
4. Mime a particular nursery rhyme or incident and encourage the children to guess the mime. They can then choose something to mime in return.
5. Use drama.
6. provide pictures to talk about. Help the child to notice the details using prepositions in discussion. "Is the man in the blue hat in front of or behind the lady?" "Is the boy climbing under or over the gate?" "Is the bus going MQ or down the hill?"
7. Hunt the thimble. Encourage the children to verbalise using prepositions again. "Is the thimble inside the pot, under the pot, on the pot etc.?"

Book Knowledge

Research has shown repeatedly that where children make an early acquaintance with books and they share this experience with parents, the results are beneficial. It is important to talk about books using the language of books - pictures, words and letters - to realise that books can be looked at, read and enjoyed over and over again.

It is not automatic for a child to know how to hold a book, to know which way it opens, where the story starts, where the top of the page is or in which direction the words flow. All these things often have to be taught. Dyslexic children in particular, need to have such points drawn to their attention many times over.

Sounds

When introducing children to "sounds", sometimes referred to as "phonics", these should be taught quietly with as little voice emphasis as possible. Rather than saying "(a) is for apple", it is better to say the word first, thereby giving the clue to the sound which the child is required to listen for - hence "apple (a), bat (b)", etc.

Letter Names

Many pre-school children know the names of several letters and some can even "recite" the alphabet in order. Activities using wooden, plastic or tactile letters are all useful and will reinforce the letter shapes, both upper case ABe which are easier, and lower case abc. Many young children will have difficulty with b, d, p, g, q but soon outgrow this. The problem persists, however, for dyslexic children.

4.

Kinaesthetic Awareness

- 1, Tracing shapes, letters, words, simple pictures etc.
2. Making letters with plasticine, modelling clay, or pipe cleaners. Using chalk, paint, thick felt pens to write very large shapes and letters. Making letter shapes with the forefinger in a tray of dry or wet sand.
3. Feeling and naming sandpaper or felt shapes or letters with the eyes closed.
4. Feeling and naming wooden or plastic letters with the eyes closed.
5. Putting various objects or wooden letters in bags and asking the child to name the object or letter.
6. Jigsaw puzzles.
7. Threading a sequence of coloured beads on to a string and asking the child to repeat the sequence several times.

Physical Skills

Do not neglect the physical skills such as throwing, catching, kicking balls, skipping, hopping, jumping and balancing. Many children find these activities difficult and will need a great deal of practice.

Writing

Rather than copying letter shapes which can sometimes create or exacerbate "anti-writing" movements if not supervised very closely, large writing movements should be encouraged. These can be done as part of music and/or movement lessons, or by using the forefinger with tactile materials such as sand.

8. Play "Simon Says".

9. Playground games e.g. Follow My Leader, In and Out Among the Bluebells, The Ally Ally O.

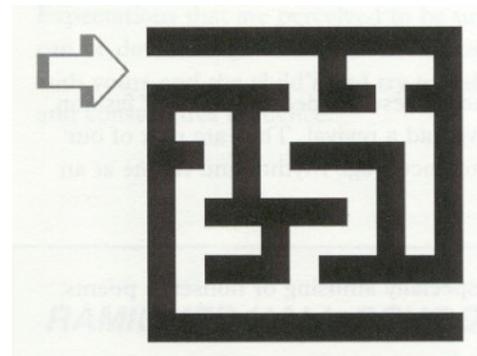
10. The Hokey-Cokey - action involving parts of the body.

11. Board games e.g. Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, Bingo etc., to develop turn-taking.

12. Watching television together. Television can be a useful form of learning if it is not allowed to be passive. There are many programmes which give scope for further discussion and activities. Older children enjoy factual programmes involving nature study and exploration which can lead on to project work and interesting files.

13. There are some splendid puzzle books in book shops and stationers. Make use of these - joining dots, mazes, simple picture crosswords are all useful.

14. Encourage your children to help in household activities e.g. laying the table.



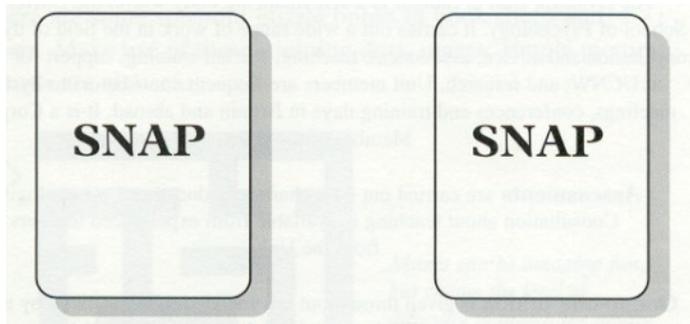
Mazes can be amazing fun, but choose the level of difficulty to match the ability.

Listening Activities and Auditory Sequencing

1. Listening for sounds.
2. Clapping out syllables.
3. I Spy using sounds, rhymes and letter names.
4. Simon Says.
5. Odd one out games.
6. Variations on "I went to market and bought."
7. Songs involving memory and sequencing.
8. Following instructions. Start with one or two only, e.g. "Please pick up the pencil and put it in the box". Gradually make the sequence longer, e.g. "Go to the shelf, find the red box, bring it to me". Encourage the child to repeat the instruction before carrying it out. His own voice is his best memory aid.

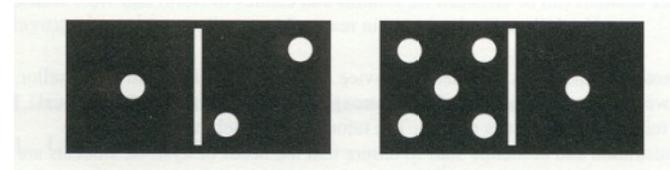
Looking Activities and Visual Sequencing

1. Snap. Use pictures only at first, then introduce letters and simple words.

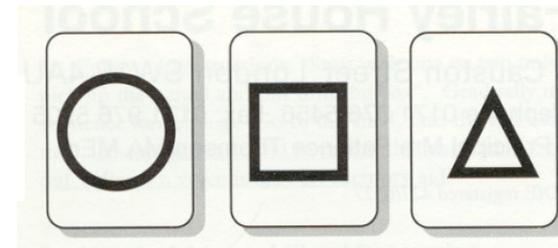


Use bits of card to make up your own games

2. Pairs.
3. Pelmanism or memory games.
4. Dominoes



5. Sorting objects into colours, shapes and sizes.
6. Happy Families.
7. Games using objects of trays.
8. After shapes have been taught, draw three shapes on a card. Show the card to the child, cover it, and then ask him to draw what he saw, or put out the sequence with shapes drawn on cards. Gradually increase the length of the sequence.



Keep the shapes nice and simple. You could also use these for snap.

9. Sequencing pictures to tell a story.
10. Bingo -looking only.
11. Visual "odd one out".