



North Warwickshire & Coventry Dyslexia Association

# Support for Parents

Registered Charity No. 1012070

Registered Address: 4 Avon Close, Bulkington, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 9SA

## **North Warwickshire & Coventry Dyslexia Association**

The North Warwickshire & Coventry Dyslexia Association (NWCDA), registered as a charity in 1992, is run by volunteers, who are mainly parents of dyslexic children.

The NWCDA exists to provide information about dyslexia and also to give parents help and support to obtain special needs provision appropriate to the education requirements of their dyslexic children.

Drop-In Sessions – at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, Hinckley Road, Nuneaton, CV11 6BH. At 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm. On the first Thursday of each College term month.

The NWCDA is a Local Association of the British Dyslexia Association.

### **The British Dyslexia Association**

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) is a national charity acting as co-ordinator for local associations. Established in 1972, the BDA campaigns for early recognition and appropriate support for dyslexics. It strives to provide support and information to all concerned with dyslexia, children, adults, their parents and families as well as professionals in education, health and employment.

The BDA believes that dyslexia should be seen as a combination of abilities and difficulties. Early intervention, suitable teaching methods and helpful learning skills can significantly reduce the difficulties. Early recognition of a dyslexic way of thinking can help to ensure no loss of self-esteem and subsequent demotivation.

The BDA is one of the worlds leading organisations providing support for dyslexic people and is one of the biggest contributors to the European scene.

## **Extra Teaching**

Whilst we fully support extra teaching being provided through your child's school, care should be taken when arranging extra teaching that it is part of an integrated programme for your child.

In principle, we believe that all the educational requirements of your child should be met from the provision provided through the school and LA. If however, to help your child, you decide to arrange specialised teaching we recommend that the school be kept informed. Any specialised teaching that you arrange should be with a teacher qualified in teaching dyslexics or special needs using a structured, multisensory programme. However care should be taken not to overload your child.

Support of the dyslexic child extends beyond the classroom and there are many aspects of the overall teaching process that parents and the family can undertake at home that will support a child's literacy learning.

Involvement in activities that give learning opportunities can be very helpful, especially to dyslexic children. For example, cooking. Choosing a recipe and being involved in the shopping for ingredients helps with estimating, value of money, quantities, numeracy, sequencing, organisational skills and a feeling of achievement in the end product.

Other more structured group activities can also help, such as Scouts, Guides, Karate etc. but do ensure that the leaders are aware of your child's reading and writing difficulties to avoid embarrassment in front of other children and the consequential loss of self esteem.

*Any activity that allows a child to succeed is important. Loss of self-esteem is one of the major factors that cause a dyslexic child to withdraw or rebel against authority.*

## How Parents can help their Child

You can help your child by: -

- Being patient and persevering with the teachers
- Keeping in close contact with the school.
- Working with the school on your child's programme of work.
- Teaching independence; before he knows left from right make sure his Bicycle bell is always on the left-hand handle bar.
- Send him on simple errands.
- Encourage him to use the telephone.
- Being aware that your child will have to work harder than many others and will become extremely tired.

## Helpful Hints

Keep a diary of all comments; contacts or telephone calls with the school or LA.

Keep a file of letters received and copies of letters sent and also include any reports.

Keep a list of contacts and telephone numbers.

## Education Act 1996 Section 7

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## Dyslexia

A person is considered dyslexic if their ability in literacy skills is markedly lower than that of their other abilities. Dyslexia, however, is not just about literacy although it is through difficulties in reading, writing or spelling that a dyslexic person is often initially identified. A dyslexic person's problems may also include one or all of the following; poor short-term memory, difficulties associated with sequencing, organisational skills, spatial awareness and numeracy. Dyslexia is a permanent condition thought to be associated with hereditary factors and is not an illness from which one can "get better". However with correctly structured teaching support a dyslexic person can learn strategies to allow them to realise their full potential. For a long time, dyslexia was not recognised as a separate condition. Parents of children who showed real ability when building models or drawing but could not write their name and address were told they were over anxious and unwilling to accept that their child was a slow learner or "simply thick".

Research and long experience has proven that there are clear differences between the way the brain of a dyslexic person and a non-dyslexic person function. It is also acknowledged that dyslexia does have its own clear characteristics. With this knowledge, specific methods, especially language skills, can be used to address specific difficulties. In helping a dyslexic person, it is important to recognise that they have difficulties in learning to use the traditional based methods and need teaching in a multisensory way; that is, using all of the senses rather than just the written word. This requires special arrangements to be made that can vary depending on the severity and nature of the specific learning difficulty.

It is common practise to define a child's specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) by their reading writing or spelling age compared with their physical age. Their ability age in other subject areas is also used to determine that the child is not just of low overall ability. Using these methods can lead to problems when trying to evaluate the actual difficulties faced by the child. In all but the mildest cases a full assessment carried out by an educational psychologist will indicate specific areas where help is needed.

### **Parent Befrienders**

One of the objectives of our Association is to help parents obtain the necessary education that dyslexic children need. To help meet this objective a Befriender currently supports the NWCDA. A Befriender offers to give members information and assistance in connection with their child based on knowledge obtained from the BDA and personal experience. A Befriender, although trained by the BDA is not a professional and no payment is being asked for any support or assistance given.

To meet legal requirements the Befriender will ask you to accept that any help is being offered in the Befrienders personal capacity and is not on behalf of the NWCDA or the BDA. Your Befriender will also ask you to accept that, although any information, advice or assistance is given in good faith  
**the Befriender cannot accept any legal liability in respect of any information, advice or assistance given.**

### **Confidentiality**

All discussions between you and your Befriender will be in strict confidence. Your Befriender may ask advice or support from other members of the Befriending Service in order to get

a second opinion on the best way forward. Members of the Befriending Service will include other BDA trained Befrienders and members of the BDA legal support team. These people will be bound by the same confidentiality rules as your Befriender. No matter will be discussed with any other person without your express permission. This includes Local Authority (LA) Officers or any other members of the NWCDA committee.

### Authority

To assist your Befriender in helping with your child's problems it may be helpful if the LA Officers spoke directly with your Befriender. Your Befriender would then ask you to sign and forward to the LA Officers a standard letter of authorisation.

### Costs

Befrienders offer their services free but there are costs involved in providing the support.

### You can help your Befriender by: -

- \*Calling back when you are telephoned to save your Befrienders telephone bills.
- \*Providing a book of 1<sup>st</sup> class stamps for use in writing to you or on your behalf.
- \*Paying your Befrienders travelling expenses to any meetings attended with you or on your behalf.
- \*Providing full details of your child's history.
- \*Providing photocopies of all reports, letters etc.
- \*Calling your Befriender as soon as anything happens.
- \*Agreeing the Befrienders conditions as shown in the letter offering support.
- \*Agreeing that the LA be authorised to talk to the Befriender by signing the letter of authority if appropriate.

## NWCDA BEFRIENDERS

### Lesley Hill

A mother of two dyslexic children and one non-dyslexic son, Lesley was trained as a Befriender by the BDA in 1994. She has personal experience of the statutory procedures, her daughter having had a Statement and Special School Provision arranged before joining the NWCDA. A physiotherapist by profession, she has worked in the NHS, and has experience of communicating with parents, and has an insight into dealing with peoples' problems.

### Links with other Organisations

NWCDA Befrienders are part of a National Network operating through local associations and co-ordinated by the BDA. They also have contacts with other voluntary agencies dealing with children's disabilities and needs. Your Befriender is able to call on any members of the Network to help with your child's case.

For further information contact NWCDA Helpline :-

Telephone: 024 7631 6813

E-mail: [seekingadvice@virginmedia.com](mailto:seekingadvice@virginmedia.com)

Web: [www.justdyslexic.org.uk](http://www.justdyslexic.org.uk)