

Literacy tips and ideas for parents

General

For top tips on reading, handwriting, spelling, memory and organisation, take a look at these short films by Julianne Miller, a specialist teacher and mum, who shares her ideas on supporting your child at home. They contain practical tips aimed at helping children aged from 5 to 11 years. Cut and paste this link into your computer's search bar to find the precise content:

<http://www.parentchampions.org.uk/resources/top-tips-on-reading-handwriting-spelling-memory-and-organisation/>

Useful organisations and background reading for parents

The British Dyslexia Association (www.bdadyslexia.org.uk / 0845 251 9002) offers dyslexia information, advice and services.

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre (www.arkellcentre.org.uk / 01252 792 400) offers dyslexia support and advice to anyone who may need it (adults and children), whether they think *they* have dyslexia or care for someone who may have dyslexia.

Dyslexia: A parents' survival guide, by Chrstine Ostler. Down to earth advice with useful coping strategies for home and school, this books is recommended by teacher trainers in the field. Price: from £2 from Amazon 'new & used' (out of print).

Creative, successful, dyslexia: 23 high achievers share their stories, by Margaret Rooke. Inspiring, book packed with positive tales from those with literacy issues who've thrived and excelled. Price: £12.99 (less on Amazon).

SPELLING RESOURCES

- **Wordshark** (www.wordshark.co.uk) has been producing learning games for reading and spelling for over 20 years, revising and updating continually to reflect best educational practice. This is tried-and-tested at Honeywell School, and is used to help children who are struggling with literacy. However, its package of games would be beneficial for any children in the family. Price: single download from £114.
- **Spelling Tutor** (www.spellingtutor.co.uk) is available as an online subscription and is recommended by educational psychologists as a good way of helping children, including those with dyslexia, to learn the first 1,000 most common words, using multisensory, spaced repetition methodologies. Price: online subscriptions from £6 per month.
- **DoodleEnglish/DoodleSpell** (www.doodleenglish.com) is an app, primarily for use on phone or tablet, designed with in-built intelligence that enables it to identify the strengths and weaknesses unique to each child and construct a work programme specific to their needs. It creates an immersive, interactive learning experience for young children, with added games and avatars, where learners are guided through a programme to the areas they need to work on via short, snappy exercises. Designed to be used at least five times per week; and already used and recommended by parents at Honeywell Junior School. **DoodleMaths** is also available. Price: online subscriptions from £5.99 per month.
- **Nessy: Help for Children with Dyslexia** (www.nessy.co.uk) has been making fun, educational software for children since 1999 and has developed an excellent reputation among educators, parents and children alike. According to Nessy, their products: 'offer the complete 'dyslexia aware' solution with a suite of multisensory products aimed at making learning to read, write and spell fun. Nessy believes that if children have fun, then learning becomes more memorable. Where children play games the increased level of engagement

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leads to dramatic improvements. Combine this philosophy with a highly structured, incremental system based on well-established principles of learning that can show dramatic gains'. Price: Nessy Reading & Spelling online subscription from £8 per month.

READING RESOURCES

- **Toe by Toe** (toe-by-toe.co.uk) is a small red book designed for anyone who finds reading difficult. This includes weak readers who struggle to decode, or those with dyslexic difficulties. The unique syllable division method, employed by Toe by Toe, is very easy to use. Once the sound of a phoneme has been taught using the 'polynons' (nonsense words), these rules can be applied to *any* multi-syllabic word and students find a whole new world of reading opens up. Sometimes this intervention is given in school (if so, we will let you know). If not, this workbook can be bought and worked through at home, in just 10 mins per day. Little and often is essential.
- Choose books from highly-regarded specialist publisher **Barrington Stoke** (www.barringtonstoke.co.uk) which has been producing readable material 'to help every child unlock a love of reading' for over 20 years. Alongside engaging stories written by well-known writers, Barrington Stoke books contain a host of special features (font, paper shade, wider line-spacing etc) designed to help dyslexic readers. We particularly love their Little Gems series. Ask at good libraries; buy direct from Barrington Stoke; independent bookshops; or from Amazon (cheapest choice there is 'new & used').
- **Phonic Books** for beginners and 'catch-up' readers (www.phonicbooks.co.uk): a range of books that follows a highly-structured phonic sequence with imaginative stories; appealing characters; colourful, motivating illustrations; text on a cream background; and the gradual introduction of high frequency words. This range has the added bonus of a game in every book.
- **Badger Books** (<https://www.badgerlearning.co.uk/primary-struggling-or-reluctant-reader-books.html>) supplies a great range of books for children who are struggling with reading and/or are reluctant to read. Available in paperback or as eBook PDFs, the range is suitable for all learning styles and has a high ratio of pictures to words to maintain older children's interest, whilst encouraging a love of reading.
- It's also great to encourage your child to enjoy literature (and other enriching podcast content) via the **Audible** or **Apple Books** apps; or as Kindle downloads, which can be listened to in read-aloud mode (also possible through Alexa). Alternatively, find high quality **BBC Sounds** dramatisations and readings of children's books at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/category/childrens>. Engaging with books in this way takes the pressure off, while exposing your child to the higher-level vocabulary and exciting age-appropriate content they need.

WRITING/HANDWRITING RESOURCES

- **Clicker 7** (www.cricksoft.com), is a student-friendly word processing package that is simple to use and easy to customise, and which has been described as a 'complete literacy toolkit'. It includes text-to-speech functions; context-sensitive word prediction capability; and hundreds of ready-made Clicker Sets that are really easy to customise, from simple sentence building sets to comprehensive word banks. Suitable for primary age children. Price: from £250 for a single computer licence.

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- **Read & Write 11.5 Gold** (www.enablingtechnology.com) is similar to Clicker 7 but with a greater choice of easy-to-use tools. It's described as 'the world's leading literacy support software, designed to help users of all ages who require extra assistance when reading or composing text'. The software provides users with dyslexia, literacy difficulties and English as a second language with literacy support throughout their education 'from primary through to tertiary level and into the workplace'. Suitable for age 6 to adult. Price: from £180 inc VAT.
- **Mind Maps for Kids: An Introduction** by Tony Buzan. This book is Buzan's original guide to the mind map strategy that helps children to organise their ideas for written work and much more. His techniques are especially useful for those with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. Ages: 7-14. Price: from £2.81 'new and used' on www.amazon.co.uk.
- **Handwriting Practice Key Stage 2** by Schofield & Sims. These books are fully compatible with any school handwriting scheme and work methodically through letters and joins. Perfect for home and easy to use. Price: from £2.99 www.amazon.co.uk.
- **Ultra grips pack x5** (www.smartkids.co.uk). Rubbery pen and pencil grips that help learners who struggle to grasp their pencils correctly and easily to place their fingers in the right positions for ease, control and comfort. Price: from £7.99
- **English Type Junior** (www.englishtype.com/junior). A motivating programme that teaches children the skills needed for fluent **touch typing**, while also supporting literacy development using a multisensory approach suitable for dyslexic learners. There's strong colour coding, visual simplicity, spoken and written instructions, a choice of background screen colours and highly structured content to aid success. Ages 6-11 years. Price: from £29.95 plus delivery for home learning version.
- **Touch-Type Read & Spell** (TTRS) (www.readandspell.com). This is another highly recommended multisensory online typing programme, that teaches touch typing, reading and spelling all at the same time. Recommended (and used) by the British Dyslexia Association. Price: online subscriptions from £9.99 per month.

Please do get in touch with the Junior SEN department with any further queries at junior.sen@honeywell.wandsworth.sch.uk or Lucy Butler at lucy.butler@honeywell.wandsworth.sch.uk