

**PART TWO
DYSLEXIA & ADHD**

**Strategies and Supports
for Parents**

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Quick Recap Part One

- **1. History of Dyslexia and the “umbrella” of SLD**
- **2. Definitions (simple and updated) and Brain Differences**
- **3. Strengths of Children & Adults with Dyslexia-Must Praise**
- **4. Challenges for Students (Decoding, Sight Words, Fluency)**
- **5. Sight Words at Home-Helpful Hints**
- **6. Help at Home with Reading Fluency (Importance of Reading Aloud)**
- **7. Social and Emotional Challenges Related to Reading Difficulties**
- **8. How Reading Difficulties Negatively Impact Writing and Math Skills**
- **9. Anxiety & Learning Challenges**

Working Memory Weaknesses are Considered Core Features of Dyslexia (25-50%)

Working Memory in Action


- **Recalling the beginning of a sentence to understand the end.**
- **Holding a number in your head while performing a multi-step math problem.**
- **Following a set of instructions for a recipe or a task.**
- **Remembering directions to a new location.**
- **Organizing Tasks.**
- **Remembering a shopping list or phone number.**
- **Retaining information just read or heard.**

Helping Your Child at Home with Working Memory Challenges

Dyslexia often involves working memory weaknesses, particularly with executive functioning (i.e. planning, organizing, time management, focus, emotional regulation, task initiation, self-monitoring). This affects the ability to manage distractions and keep track of tasks.

Strategies like using external aids (lists, planners) and minimizing distractions can help manage these challenges.

Other techniques include using brain training exercises (memory games, puzzles, dancing, learning a new skill), staying physically active, getting enough sleep, and using memory-enhancing strategies like chunking and visualization. Other helpful habits include creating routines, using organizational tools (digital apps like Asana, Google Calendars, Planners, Notebooks), and focusing on one task at a time.



Chunking & Visualization

- **Chunking** is the process of breaking down large amounts of complex information into smaller, more manageable, and meaningful units or "chunks". This strategy helps to overcome the limited capacity of the human working memory (which can typically only hold a few pieces of information at once) by allowing the brain to process groups of related items as single units (e.g. phone numbers).
Visualization is the use of graphic representations (like diagrams, graphs, charts, mind maps, or mental images) to organize information, communicate data, or enhance memory. This helps the brain's natural ability to process visual information more efficiently and remember it for longer periods than textual information alone.

Accommodations vs. Modifications



Accommodations allow students to demonstrate what they know without changing the target skill or grade level standard.

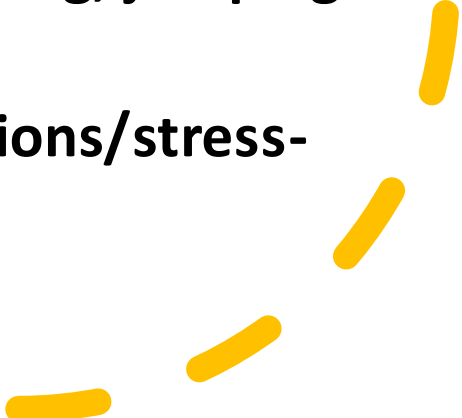
Modifications allow students to demonstrate what they know or can do, but the target skill or grade level standard is also reduced in some way. Modifications typically lower performance expectations.

Accommodations **DO NOT** change the content of instruction, give students an unfair advantage, or change the skills or knowledge that a test measures.

Students diagnosed with a Specific Learning Disability have a disadvantage. The accommodations **MAKE IT FAIR!**

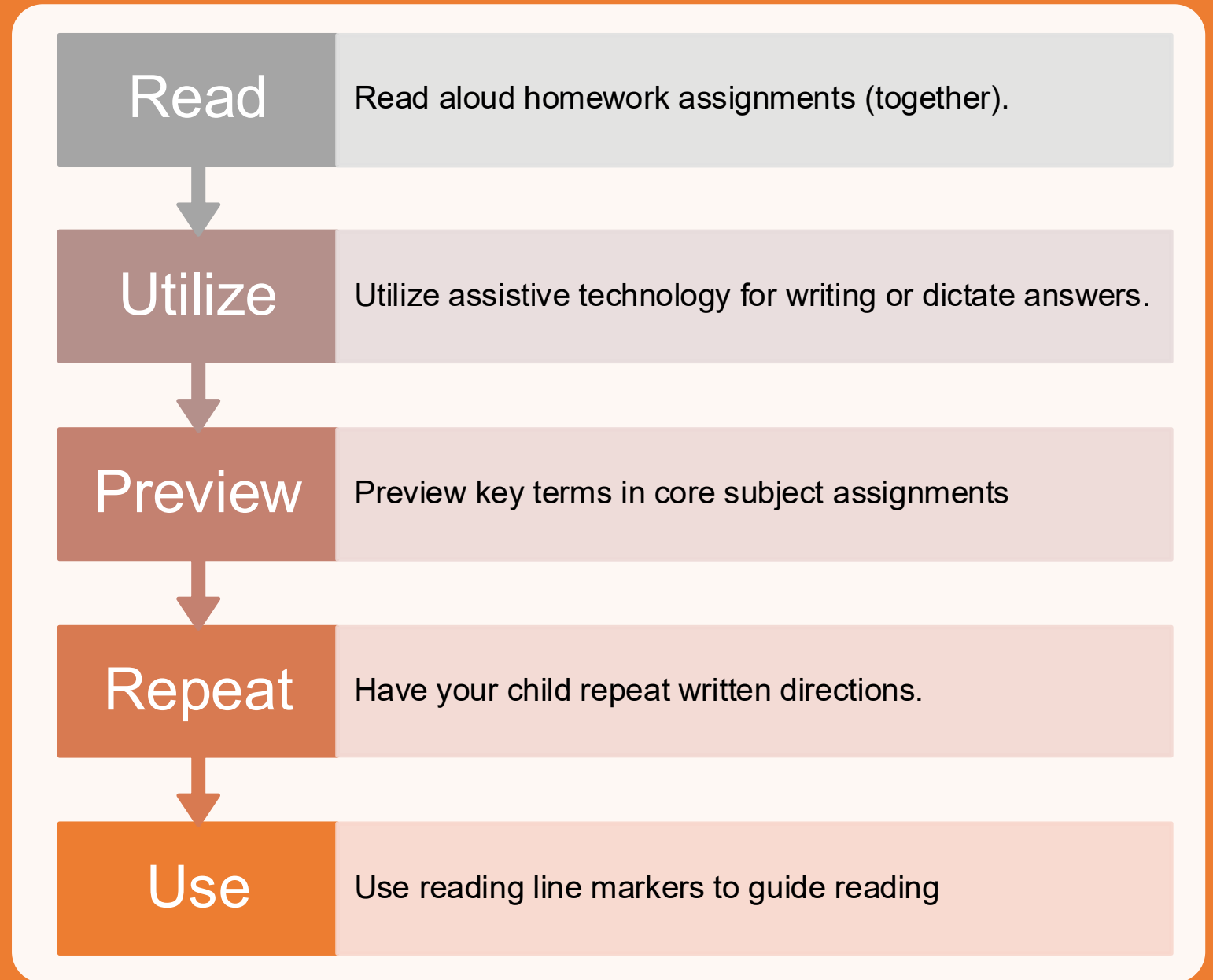


HOMEWORK ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Establish a dedicated, distraction-free, and well-lit workspace.**
 - **Use timers to structure work/break intervals.**
 - **Implement organizational tools like checklists or folders for completed homework.**
 - **Breaking assignments into smaller, manageable steps.**
 - **Allow time for movement (e.g., standing, jumping jacks, or walking).**
 - **Provide sensory aids like wiggle cushions/stress-balls if needed.**
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More Help with at Home Accommodations



Helping your Child with Organization is a Key to Success

Students in Pre-K to 1st grade should have pocket folders for storing papers. You can supply your child with a colored folder for homework and a different colored folder for parent communications/notices.


By upper elementary (starting 2nd-3rd grade & depending on the teacher) your child should have a binder with pockets/pouches, note paper, and colored dividers. Use different colored folders for core subjects and a different colored folder for parent or school communications. Attach colored folders to binder rings. This helps to prevent lost homework or school notices. This can continue to middle and high school.

Depending on the IEP accommodations, you can provide a spelling dictionary, a list of common and frequently misspelled words, a multiplication chart, calculator, reading guides, and any other useful reference materials in your child's backpack.

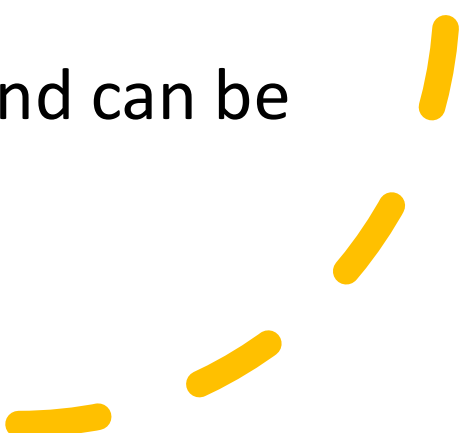
Spelling & Dyslexia

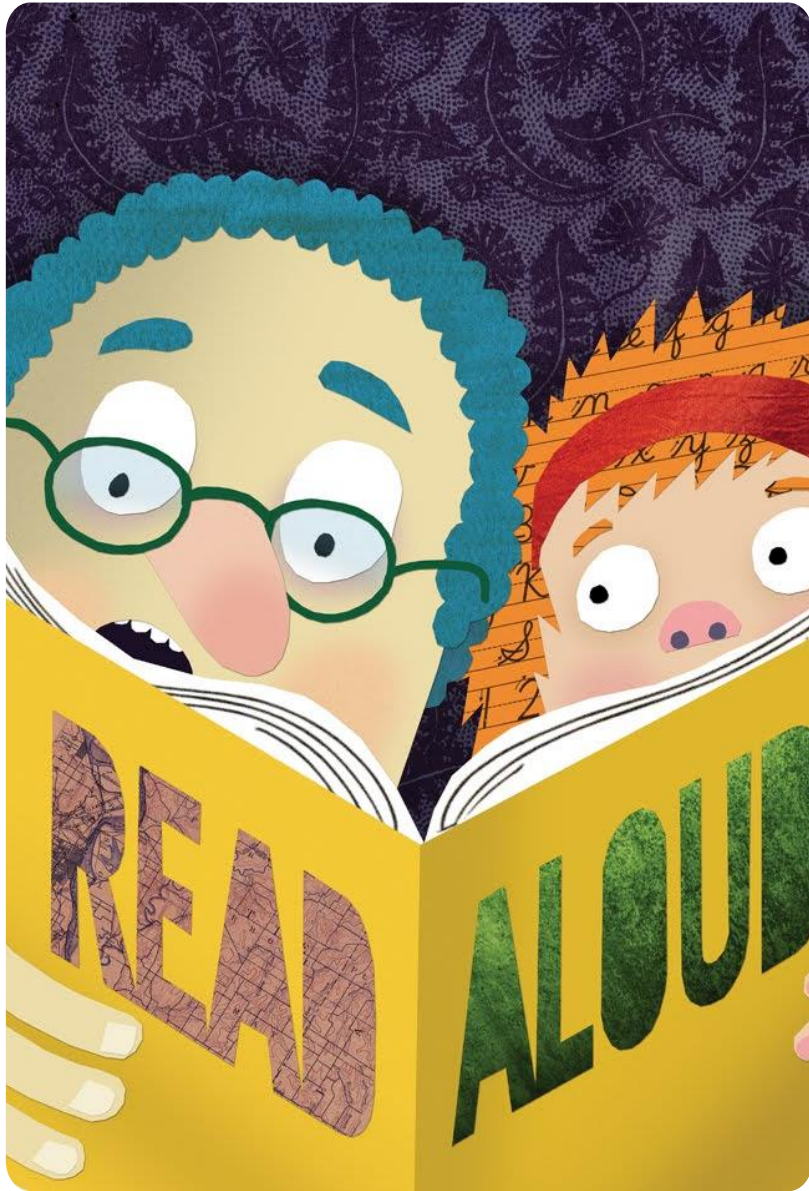
Almost all children & adults with dyslexia struggle with spelling and face obstacles in learning to cope with this aspect of their learning disability. Children and adults with dyslexia have significant challenges with spelling and writing. Many children with dyslexia learn to read well, but difficulties with spelling (and handwriting) tend to persist throughout life.

Why Spell-Checkers Do Not Work for Students Diagnosed with Dyslexia

- **Spell checkers often fail children with dyslexia because these tools require a baseline phonetic understanding. Dyslexia affects the brain's ability to process sounds and letters, causing phonetic errors too severe for standard auto-correct. Spell check often misses words spelled very closely, misuses homophones (e.g., desert/dessert or new/knew), or suggests options that a child cannot distinguish from their original mistake.**
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**Apps & Aids to
Help Your Child at
Home (starting in
elementary
through high
school and
beyond)**

- **Easy Spelling Aid:** Uses voice recognition for children to say words and see correct spelling, with dyslexia-friendly fonts/colors.
 - **Ghotit Real Writer:** Specifically designed to correct badly spelled words, phonetic mistakes, and homophones.
 - **Squeebles Spelling:** Interactive and can be individualized.
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The Importance & Benefits of Reading Aloud

- **Reading Aloud Builds Fluency**
- **Read Aloud to Build Knowledge**
- **Read Aloud to Build Vocabulary**
- **Read Aloud to Focus on Understanding**
- **Read Aloud to Create Interest in a Variety of Subjects**

IDALA
(International
Dyslexia
Association
Los Angeles)

- *Family Guide to Building Language Through Reading Aloud*
- *Adolescents and Adults with Dyslexia*
- *Applying for Accommodations on College*
• *Entrance Tests*
- *Applying for Accommodations on Graduate School Entrance Exams*
- *At-Risk English Language Learners*
- *Gifted with Dyslexia*
- *ELL and Dyslexia*



COMORBIDITY

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 50% of children diagnosed with ADHD also have been diagnosed with dyslexia.



Definition of ADHD

(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

ADHD is a neurobiological disorder characterized by chronic and developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, impulsivity, and in some cases hyperactivity, and is so pervasive and persistent that it interferes with a person's or child's daily life at home, school, work, or other settings.



ADHD and dyslexia affect the brain in different ways.

ADHD affects focus, organization, and impulse control.

Dyslexia is language-based affecting reading, spelling, writing, phonological awareness, and decoding.

Despite these differences, students with ADHD and dyslexia may experience similar struggles in both the home setting and classroom setting.

Working memory issues are prevalent with both ADHD & Dyslexia.

Types of ADHD

- ***Predominantly Inattentive:*** Hyperactivity symptoms are not present.
- ***Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive:*** Individuals with this presentation of ADHD have a significant number of hyperactive-impulsive symptoms (impulsive behavior is a term used to describe acting on impulse without thinking about the consequences).
- ***Combined Inattentive and Hyperactive-Impulsive:*** Both symptoms are present.

ADHD: Positive Traits and Strengths

- **Creative, Imaginative, Big-Hearted, Accepting and Forgiving, Adventurous, Resilient, Risk-Takers, Entrepreneurial, Observant, Full of Ideas & Spunk, Intelligent, Enthusiastic, Outgoing, and a Good Sense of Humor.**




ADHD Multimodality Intervention

- **Medication Therapy (Pharmacologist Intervention)**-Stimulant medications have been proven effective in treating 70-90 percent of children with ADHD. Appropriate medical treatment requires well-managed and carefully monitored use of medications.
- **Specific behavioral strategies** are very important interventions for managing ADHD. Behavioral interventions are learned through parent trainings and implemented at home.
- **Educational Interventions** (teachers using multiple approaches to teach curriculum, accommodations and academic supports through IEP or 504 plans).
- **Counseling** (family and/or individual)
- **Social Skills Training** (can be through insurance).

Effects on the Family

- **There are generally major issues surrounding homework as well as morning and evening routines (getting ready for school and bedtime).**
- **It is common for parents to disagree about treatment, discipline, management, structure, and other issues.**
- **Parents might deal with criticism and advice from relatives, friends, and acquaintances regarding how they should discipline, help with homework, and parent their child. This can cause parental self-doubt and adds to the stress.**
- **The family may have to deal with social issues such as peer conflicts and exclusion**
- **Having a child who requires a lot of supervision or needs extra help with homework is time consuming and interferes with the ability to get things done as planned (i.e. household chores).**

Positive Discipline & Effective Behavior Management for the Home

- **Provide structure, routine, and predictability.**
 - **Set limits and let your child know you mean business.**
 - **Establish a few specific, important rules and expectations that are clearly understood by all members of the household.**
 - **Your response to your child's behaviors and misbehaviors should be predictable.**
 - **Establish clear-cut consequences in advance with your child that are logical, reasonable, and fair. Enforce them with consistency and follow through.**
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Continue: Positive Discipline & Effective Behavior Management for the Home

- **Use contingencies in establishing boundaries. This basically involves the age-old “Grandma’s rule”— “First eat your vegetables, then you can get dessert.” (e.g “As soon as you clean your room, you may get computer time”. “Once you have finished your homework, you will then be able to watch a movie”. “You have cleared off the dinner table, now you can go out and play”.**
- **Children and teens with special needs receive far more than average negative attention from parents because misbehavior captures our attention. NOTICE and pay attention to your child when they are behaving appropriately.**
- **Make it a goal to “catch” your child being good. At least four times more frequently than when you need to respond to misbehavior.**
- **Be specific in acknowledging and praising: “I really appreciate how you cleaned up without being reminded”. “I noticed how well you were sharing and taking turns when you played with John”.**

Preventive Strategies

- **Remind through gentle warnings: “The rule is...”. “Next time...”. “Please remember to...”.**
- **Use “do” statements rather than “don’t” statements (i.e. “Please walk in the house” rather than “Don’t run in the house”).**
- **Talk about, acknowledge, and label feelings (your child’s and your own).**
- **Be observant. Notice when your child/teen is becoming agitated, overly stimulated, frustrated or angry and intervene right away. Try redirecting their attention and focus on something else.**
- **Only give your children chores and responsibilities that they are developmentally able to handle, not necessarily what other kids of the same age or siblings can do.**

More Preventive Strategies

- **Provide the supports to enable your child to follow through with chores and responsibilities. Remember that forgetfulness, procrastination, impulsivity, and disorganization can be a part of a Specific Learning Disability and/or ADHD. Your child may need reminders and some help getting started.**
- **Provide physical outlets. Your child needs to release energy and participate in active games and physical activities (so important to help with Working Memory).**
- **Prepare your child for changes in the home, such as redecorating, visitors, and changes in parent work schedules. Talk about the change and avoid surprises.**
- **Children/Teens with dyslexia/ADHD often have significant weaknesses in their development of organization skills. These children and adolescents need more direct parental/guardian support and organizational assistance than most other children/teens their age.**

Recommendations for Giving Directions

- **First, get your child's attention directly before giving directions. This means face-to-face and direct eye contact, not just calling out what you expect your child to do.**
- **Physically cue your child prior to giving directions, if needed. For example, gently tap their shoulder to get them to look at you.**
- **Do not attempt to give directions to your child/teenager if you are competing with the distractions of TV, video games, or when they are using any electronics or on their cell phone. Pause or turn those devices off first.**

Communicate Clearly and Effectively

- **Keep verbal directions clear, brief, and to the point. Eliminate unnecessary talking and elaboration. State what you want with as few words as possible, for example, “Please come to the table now”.**
- **Always check for understanding of directions. Have your child/teen repeat or rephrase what you asked them to do.**
- **Show your child what you want them to do. Model and walk through the steps.**
- **If possible, use a visual chart for chores (Working memory).**
- **Avoid multiple-step directions. Working memory weaknesses make it difficult for children/teens with ADHD and/or Dyslexia to hold on to information while carrying out tasks. Giving one direction at a time is more useful.**
- **Do not state your direction in the form of a question such as, “Would you get in your pajamas, please?” “Are you ready to turn off the lights?” Instead, make a direct statement, for example, “Lights off in ten minutes.” Please get in your pajamas now.”**

Organization: More Tips for Older Students

- **Use large laminated envelopes that are hole-punched and inserted in the binder for homework and assorted project papers.**
- **An accordion folder is an alternative to a three-ring binder for those who find it easier to manage at school or college. The tabs of the accordion folder are labeled for homework assignments, work to turn in, and each subject. At school, during the day, papers can be quickly placed behind the tab for that subject. Papers not needed in school should be refiled in the evening into the three-ring binder maintained at home.**
- **Your teen's planner, monthly calendar, or assignment sheet should be hole-punched and kept in the front of the notebook (or in the front or back of an accordion folder if used instead of the three-ring binder at school).**
- **Provide materials to organize lockers (shelves, magnetic hooks, and other locker accessories).**



ADHD and DYSLEXIA

While there is a connection between ADHD and dyslexia, not everyone with one condition will have the other, but the percentages are extremely high.

When both conditions are present, it can create additional challenges.

How Many Goals Should be Written in an IEP?

The Following is from *The Federation for Children with Special Needs*:

- IDEA does not establish a specific number of goals that must be included in an IEP.
- Often IEPs include too many goals. This can be confusing to parents and teachers and put unrealistic expectations on the student. To keep the number manageable, consider setting one goal for each “big” area of concern, for example, basic reading skills (decoding & sight words), reading comprehension, math calculation, and study skills/behavior.
- The Team decides the number of goals necessary to meet a child’s needs.
- Prioritize those goals that will have the biggest impact.
- **If there are too many goals it will be difficult for a student to make effective progress in each area.**

Questions?

Even though a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) or ADHD can generally persist from childhood throughout adulthood, it does not have to limit one's future. There are countless adults who are highly successful in every profession and walk of life!

