

? Reading and Writing

Of all the skills we learn as children, reading and writing are amongst the most difficult and important. They help us build our knowledge and gain an understanding of the world. As we get older, our ability to take in and produce written information is considered to be a fundamental skill required for success.

So it's not surprising that if reading and writing prove difficult skills to learn, it can be a big deal for the child, for their parents and for teachers at School. For children with learning difficulties, learning to read can be an exhausting and frustrating task that simply doesn't get any easier. When this is the case, it follows that in many instances these difficulties continue into adulthood and the difficulty is dealt with or hidden, rather than overcome.

So what's the problem?

Lots of people take the act of reading for granted... for them it is acquired effortlessly and soon becomes second nature. But the processes involved are anything but simple! When we look at some text, a whole load of physical, neurological and mental processes have to get to work together in order for us to make sense of what's on the page. Our eyes have to track the text in a precise movement, nerves in our eyes take information to the brain and then the brain has got to do some special processing to convert that into language and then that information has got to be converted again into meanings... phew!!

With a process this complex, there are plenty of things that can (and do) go wrong for some people. It's not that those people are lazy or stupid... in fact they might be trying **MUCH** harder than other people... it's simply that their ability to process the information isn't as efficient, so learning through practice is much slower than it should be.

Signs that someone is struggling

When children are learning to read, there can be a number of different ways you might notice they are struggling. This tends to signpost a difficulty in one of the following areas...



Decoding information

If a child is struggling to decode the information (or break it down into its building blocks), this could be an indication of dyslexia. The signs of this problem include:

- Difficulty sounding out words and recognising them out of context
- Confusion between letters and the sounds they represent
- Slow at reading aloud
- Reading with no expression (just getting the words is hard enough!)
- Ignoring punctuation



? Reading and Writing

Comprehension difficulties

If children can't decode the words on a page, it makes it much more difficult to understand and remember what they're reading (and the act of reading is so tiring, there's not much energy left for understanding). Problems with comprehension might lead to:

- Confusion about the meaning of words and sentences
- Inability to connect ideas in a passage
- Difficulties sorting out big ideas from minor detail
- Lack of concentration

Retention difficulties

School (and home) activities involving reading often include questions and answers about what has been read. Being able to do this requires the ability to retain information... and as reading skills progress, children are expected to retain more and more information. So if this is a problem, this is where the child can feel they are falling further and further behind as the other kids around them retain more and more information. Difficulties with retention can show themselves in the following ways:

- Trouble remembering or summarising what is read
- Difficulty connecting reading subjects to prior knowledge
- Inability to apply content of text to personal experiences
- Struggle to look at the reading subject from other perspectives

What help is available?

Often people who have significant problems with reading and writing will be diagnosed as being dyslexic. This is no reflection on intelligence or IQ (as sufferers are often bright and creative people); it just means that the complex processes involved in learning this skill aren't working properly.

People tackle difficulties with reading and writing in a number of different ways. For many the first option is more teaching around word sounds (phonological), there are also a variety of different methods of tackling the problem, including sound-based therapy and visual therapy. All of these routes have their merits and their success stories.



The Dore Programme

Unlike a lot of other treatments or Programmes out there, Dore doesn't just tackle the symptoms, but deals with the root cause of the learning difficulty. Our Programme stimulates the brain in a way that improves the efficiency of the brain when processing information. It means that you can see improvements in decoding, comprehending and retaining information... a breakthrough that can prove nothing short of transformational!!

It's worth noting that the Dore Programme is not a soft option. It requires plenty of dedication and commitment. You have to do your exercises for 10 minutes, twice a day.. for around a year! On top of that, we recommend that you practise your reading and writing as often as you can... because people have told us that that is how they see the biggest improvements!

