

## What Dyslexia IS NOT and What to do about what it is!

Dyslexia is not an intellectual disability. It is not a condition that can be cured. It is a neurological difference in the learning pathways and certainly not in the potential of the person to lead an independent, full and successful life.

Dyslexia occurs at all levels of intelligence, average, above average, and highly gifted. It is most commonly characterised by difficulties with learning to read, write and spell at a level expected according to a child's age and grade level.

An important fact to remember is that people with Dyslexia often have unique abilities in thinking outside the square and being creative, abilities that are highly valued in today's school curriculum and by employers around the world.

One of the biggest barriers to a child with dyslexia becoming successful is the child's own perception of herself/himself as a learner. This perception develops throughout schooling in response to feedback (intended or otherwise) given by teachers, family members and classmates. If the feedback is essentially that of failing or not measuring up to expectations, then the child's self-esteem can be severely affected with dramatic consequences along the learning journey into adulthood. So, what can we (who have responsibility for a young person with dyslexia) do to ensure that our support leads to a happy, successful rounded person? That our support is strong and authentic enough to combat the negativity that is sure to be experienced from time to time?

### Some suggestions:

- ♥ Find, encourage and develop strengths, abilities, interests and skills and provide occasions where these can be celebrated SPELD Victoria Fact Sheet No. 1 SPELD Victoria Fact Sheet No. XX
- ♥ Firmly implant the concept that all of us have needs and areas for improvement in a range of aspects in our lives at different times
- ♥ Give clear, honest explanations (age appropriate) of what 'dyslexia' is and is not and teach the child the words needed to explain this to friends and others. This helps in developing resilience
- ♥ Provide evidence-based interventions in identified areas of learning and being
- ♥ Let them know that some people with dyslexia have become very successful. Some examples they may know are: actors Tom Cruise, Robin Williams and Keira Knightly, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, entrepreneur Richard Branson and Jessica Watson who sailed around the globe at 16 years of age.

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**Learn more:**

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