

## What is a teaching assistance role in education?

discussed by the education endowment foundation (EEF), states that a teaching assistant (TA) is a member of school staff who supports teachers and helps pupils with learning and classroom activities. Teaching assistants work in primary schools, secondary schools, and special educational settings. Their role is to help students understand lessons, provide extra support to individuals or small groups, and assist with classroom organisation and behaviour management.

### Typical responsibilities of a teaching assistant include:

- Helping pupils with reading, writing, or maths
- Supporting children with special educational needs (SEN)
- Preparing classroom materials and activities
- Assisting the teacher during lessons
- Supervising pupils during group work or school activities
- Encouraging students' confidence and participation



## What is dyslexia?

Stated by the NHS (2026), Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty where your brain works differently to most people. It mainly affects things like reading, writing, and using numbers. There is no cure but there are things you can do to help manage the condition.

### Signs of Dyslexia

Dyslexia mainly affects a child's reading, writing and spelling.

Signs of dyslexia in children can include:

- learning to speak later than other children
- not being interested in activities around language, like saying the alphabet
- reading at a level below what's expected at their age
- having difficulty with numbers, telling the time, and remembering the order of things, like days of the week
- written work that looks messy and has lots of spelling mistakes
- being slow and hesitant when reading aloud
- finding it challenging to plan and organise schoolwork

Children living with dyslexia may become frustrated. This can sometimes lead to disruptive behaviour, or make a child become withdrawn at school and home.



## Additional help with dyslexia

Supporting Classroom learning

# How dyslexia presents in different age stages

## Ages 3 to 5 years old

Children who suffer from dyslexia can experience challenges in developing language abilities such as recognizing rhyming words, learning phonemes, memorizing sequences, and understanding instructions. Such children could also encounter problems with vocabulary acquisition or pattern recognition in words and phonemes. At this point, issues are associated with phonological awareness, which is the ability to identify and manipulate phonemes, an essential aspect of learning to read.



## Ages 11 to 18 years old

For children who have dyslexia attending secondary education from the ages of 11 to 18, it is possible that dyslexia will make an even bigger impression because there will be an increase in demands, amount of reading and independent studying, notetaking, and revision for exams. Students with dyslexia may find it difficult to organise their coursework, manage their time, revise, structure their work, and comprehend complex vocabularies. There may be some subjects in particular that will pose challenges because they require extensive writing and reading.

## Ages 5 to 11 years old

Dyslexia usually becomes apparent during primary schooling, from ages 5 to 11, when the child begins reading and writing. The child will have difficulty with reading ability, spelling commonly used words, handwriting, punctuation, and retention of knowledge. It may also be hard for the child to write from the blackboard, organize their work, understand written directions, and work at the same pace as others when it comes to reading comprehension tasks. Sequencing problems, difficulty concentrating, and poor working memory skills can cause difficulties in other subjects such as maths and sciences, which require reading skills.



# Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment

An inclusive classroom is one where all children can participate and learn successfully regardless of their needs. TAs can contribute significantly to creating an environment that supports pupils with dyslexia.

## Supporting Classroom Organisation

Children with dyslexia often benefit from predictable routines and organised learning environments. TAs can help by:

- Ensuring resources are clearly labelled
- Using visual timetables
- Breaking tasks into smaller steps
- Providing checklists
- Helping pupils organise books and equipment
- Giving advance warning of changes in routine

Reducing confusion and anxiety helps pupils focus more effectively on learning.

## Display and Visual Support

Visual support can help pupils process information more effectively. TAs may use:

- Colour-coded resources
- Visual prompts
- Word banks
- Picture cues
- Graphic organisers
- Clear and uncluttered displays

Too much visual information can overwhelm pupils with dyslexia, so displays should be simple, relevant, and accessible.

# Supporting Literacy Development

Literacy support is one of the key responsibilities of a TA working with pupils who have dyslexia.

## Reading Support

Children with dyslexia often struggle with decoding words, reading fluency, and comprehension. TAs can support reading development through:

### Phonics Support

Phonics teaches the relationship between letters and sounds. TAs can reinforce phonics learning by:

- Practising letter sounds regularly
- Using multisensory phonics activities
- Encouraging blending and segmenting skills
- Revisiting previously learned sounds
- Using games and repetition

### Shared Reading

Shared reading allows pupils to read alongside an adult or peer. TAs can:

- Read aloud to model fluency
- Encourage pupils to follow the text with a finger or ruler
- Discuss vocabulary and meaning
- Ask comprehension questions
- Provide positive feedback

This approach reduces anxiety and builds reading confidence.

### Reading Technology

Assistive technology can support pupils who struggle with reading. TAs may help children use:

- Audiobooks
- Text-to-speech software
- Reading pens
- Coloured overlays
- Digital reading programmes

# Supporting Spelling and Writing

Writing tasks can be particularly challenging for children with dyslexia due to difficulties with spelling, sequencing, handwriting, and organising ideas.

## Spelling Strategies

TAs support spelling by teaching strategies such as:

- Breaking words into syllables
- Using mnemonics
- Learning high-frequency words
- Practising word families
- Using magnetic letters or letter tiles
- Encouraging overlearning through repetition

Children benefit from regular, short practice sessions rather than long activities.

## Supporting Written Work

Many pupils with dyslexia struggle to organise their ideas in writing. TAs can help by:

- Using planning templates
- Encouraging mind maps
- Scribing for pupils when appropriate
- Helping pupils sequence ideas
- Giving verbal prompts
- Supporting proofreading

## Handwriting Support

Some children with dyslexia also experience difficulties with fine motor skills and handwriting. TAs can support by:

- Encouraging correct pencil grip
- Using lined or coloured paper
- Allowing extra time
- Providing handwriting practice
- Supporting typing skills where appropriate

# Here is a step by step on how a teaching assistance acedmical benefits a child with dyslexia

A skilled TA helps bridge the gap between the child's ability and the demands of the classroom.

## 1. Making learning accessible

Children with dyslexia may struggle to process instructions quickly, copy from the board, or decode written information. A TA can:

- Read instructions aloud
- Rephrase information in simpler language
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Use visual aids and multisensory learning
- Provide repetition without embarrassment
- Support literacy interventions



## 2. Improving literacy skills

Research shows TAs are especially effective when delivering structured reading and literacy interventions in small groups or one-to-one settings. Effective programmes often involve:

- Short, regular sessions
- Explicit phonics instruction
- Reading fluency practice
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Guided comprehension



## 3. Providing processing time

Many dyslexic children understand concepts but need longer to process written or verbal information. A TA can:

- Allow thinking time
- Repeat questions calmly
- Check understanding privately
- Prevent the child from falling behind during fast-paced lessons



# Using Multisensory Teaching Approaches

Multisensory teaching is widely recognised as an effective approach for supporting pupils with dyslexia. It involves using multiple senses during learning activities, including seeing, hearing, speaking, touching, and movement.

## Activities

- Writing letters in sand or shaving foam
- Clapping syllables
- Using coloured cards and visual aids
- Tracing letters while saying sounds aloud
- Using movement and actions during learning
- Matching games and sorting activities

Multisensory methods help strengthen memory and understanding.

## How Does Multisensory Learning Helps?

Children with dyslexia often struggle to process and retain information through one method alone. By engaging several senses at the same time, learning becomes more meaningful and memorable. This approach also increases engagement and enjoyment, which can improve motivation.

# Emotional and Social Support

Children who repeatedly struggle in literacy tasks may begin to believe they are less capable than others. TAs can help build confidence by:

- Praising strengths and effort
- Celebrating small successes
- Encouraging participation
- Avoiding negative comp

# Supporting Memory and Organisation

## Supporting Memory

TAs can support memory by:

- Giving one instruction at a time
- Repeating information clearly
- Using visual reminders
- Encouraging note-taking
- Checking understanding regularly
- Using memory aids such as songs or rhymes

## Organisational Skills

Organisation can be improved through consistent support and routines. TAs may:

- Help pupils pack bags and organise folders
- Use colour-coded subjects
- Encourage use of planners or diaries
- Break homework into manageable steps
- Use visual schedules

# What makes a TA especially effective for dyslexia?

A TA tends to have the best impact when they:

- Understand dyslexia and how it affects processing
- Are patient and consistent
- Adapt teaching methods rather than repeating the same approach
- Work closely with teachers and parents
- Focus on strengths as well as challenges
- Encourage independence over time

# Organisations

these organisations support pupils, parents, and schools by offering assessments, teaching strategies, training, assistive technology advice, and information about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

[The British Dyslexia Association](#) (BDA) is one of the main organisations supporting individuals with dyslexia. The BDA provides information for parents and teachers, advice on classroom strategies, assistive technology guidance, and accredited training programmes for education staff. The organisation also offers resources to help improve literacy skills and educational support.

[The Dyslexia Action](#) provides specialist teaching, assessments, and support services for children and adults with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. They also support schools through training and intervention programmes.

[The National Association for Special Educational Needs \(nasen\)](#) supports inclusive education by providing training, guidance, and resources for schools and professionals working with pupils who have SEND, including dyslexia.

[The Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#) provides evidence-based research and guidance on interventions, literacy support, and effective teaching strategies that can improve academic outcomes for children with dyslexia.



## What are the beneficial outcomes of having support in schools?



Support in schools has many beneficial outcomes for children academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviourally. Support from teaching assistants (TAs), SENCOs, and specialist staff helps pupils access learning through adapted resources, targeted interventions, and additional explanations, improving academic achievement, confidence, and participation. For children with additional needs, including Dyslexia, support can reduce anxiety, frustration, and low self-esteem while promoting inclusion and independence. Support staff also help pupils develop communication, organisation, emotional regulation, and behaviour-management skills that are important for future education and employment. These practices are guided by key UK policies including the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice (0-25 Years), the Equality Act 2010, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), which ensure schools provide inclusive education, safeguarding, and appropriate support for pupils with SEND. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation shows that targeted support from trained staff can improve both academic progress and long-term outcomes for children.



## How can challenges be assessed and support given

Children with Dyslexia may experience difficulties with reading, spelling, handwriting, memory, sequencing, and processing written or verbal information. They may also find it challenging to follow instructions, organise work, copy from the board, and complete tasks within set time limits, which can affect learning across different subjects.

These adjustments are supported by the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice (0-25 Years), and the Equality Act 2010, which require schools to provide appropriate support and equal access to education for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Research from the Education Endowment Foundation shows that structured interventions and targeted support can improve educational outcomes for children with dyslexia.

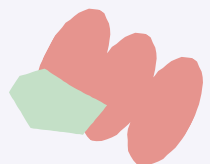
Schools can support children with dyslexia by making reasonable adjustments to teaching and classroom activities. Strategies may include breaking instructions into smaller steps, allowing extra processing time, using visual resources and multisensory teaching methods, and reducing unnecessary copying tasks. Assistive technology such as laptops, audiobooks, speech-to-text software, and reading pens can also improve access to learning. Teaching assistants (TAs) and SENCOs may provide targeted literacy interventions and differentiated activities suited to the child's individual needs. Schools should work collaboratively with parents and external professionals to ensure support is effective and regularly reviewed.

## Resources

schools can provide a range of equipment and assistive technology to support children with Dyslexia and help them access learning more effectively. Equipment is often used alongside classroom adjustments and targeted interventions to reduce barriers to reading, writing, organisation, and processing information.

Examples of equipment and resources include:

- Laptops or tablets for typing instead of handwriting
- Speech-to-text software to help record ideas in written form
- Text-to-speech software and audiobooks to support reading
- Reading pens that scan and read words aloud
- Coloured overlays or coloured paper to reduce visual stress
- Visual timetables and organisational planners
- Spellcheckers and electronic dictionaries
- Noise-reducing headphones to improve concentration
- Large-print resources or adapted worksheets where appropriate



The teaching assistants have a vital role in assisting students with Dyslexia in schools with respect to access to education, acquisition of literacy and personal achievement in learning. The condition of Dyslexia involves problems with reading, spelling, writing, memory, sequencing and processing of information, and can hinder students' ability to learn effectively in various curricular areas. Teaching assistants assist children through modification of classroom activities, breakdown of instructions into manageable units, repetition and clarification of learning experiences, and multisensory teaching approaches, involving visual, auditory and practical components of learning. They can provide assistance in the use of special technological aids such as laptops, reading pens, speech-to-text programs, audio books, coloured overlays and visual timetables to facilitate access to learning and minimize challenges with written learning experiences. Teaching assistants are often associated with class teachers and SENCOs to offer targeted interventions and monitor progress in line with individual learning needs of each child. Furthermore, teaching assistants are responsible for developing organizational skills, fluency in reading, spelling and independent learning strategies.

The support provided by TAs is guided by important legislation and educational policies in the UK. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced greater support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and established Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children requiring additional support. The SEND Code of Practice (0-25 Years) outlines procedures schools must follow to identify, assess, and support children with SEND through a graduated approach of assess, plan, do, and review. When looking at the Equality Act 2010 it also requires schools to make reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties can access education equally. TAs contribute to these procedures by observing pupils, recording progress, implementing interventions, and supporting inclusive classroom practice. The Safeguarding procedures outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) are also important because all school staff, including TAs, have a responsibility to protect children's welfare and support their educational development.

Many different organisations and professionals may be involved in supporting a child with dyslexia alongside the TA and in some case the child could possibly have an individual learning plan, (IDP) and will help implement strategies to help that child. SENCOs coordinate SEND provision within schools and ensure appropriate interventions are implemented. Class teachers adapt lesson planning and differentiate work to meet individual learning needs. Educational psychologists may assess cognitive and learning needs, while speech and language therapists can support communication and language-processing difficulties if required. Parents and carers are also important because they help reinforce learning strategies at home and work collaboratively with schools to support progress.

Supporting children with dyslexia from an early stage will not only benefit their current academic performance but also help in the future in terms of schooling, employment, and self-reliance. Such children can be helped in improving their literacy skills, communication, organisational ability, and problem-solving skills, all of which are crucial for future success in their studies and career paths. Moreover, such assistance to children will allow them to learn ways in which they could overcome their problems on their own when they grow older.



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