



Questions to ask yourself about your child's difficulties

Reading

- What happens when your child can't read a word? Do they guess wildly or attempt to work it out? How successfully?
- In continuous reading, do they make errors, eg miss words, miss syllables (beginning, middle or end)?
- Can they read for information, eg a bus timetable; a computer game manual; a TV guide?
- Can they read their own writing?
- Can they remember what they have read? Can they remember or understand a sentence, a page, a chapter?
- Do they seem to be concentrating on decoding?
- What strategies do they use to avoid reading?
- What help do they need? What helps at home, if anything? (eg If I read the text book to them, they can do the homework.)

Writing

- How do they hold a pen? Are there motor control problems?
- Is handwriting unusually big/small?
- Is it legible, if you discount spelling?
- Is it erratic (eg starts off neat but becomes untidy as thinking about content takes over)?
- Do they write slowly? How much do they write?
- Are they better on a word processor?
- What help do they need?
- What helps at home? Do they dictate or use a word processor.

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Organisation

- Do they have difficulty planning?
- Are there any signs of panic, eg about not knowing where to start?
- Do they have avoidance strategies?
- Do they forget what they is doing?
- Do they carry everything around in their school bag because they don't know what they need when? (Note – untidy bedrooms are normal!)

Spelling

- What sort of errors do they make?
- Are words spelled as they sound? If not, what is the logic behind the attempt?
- Can they spell if they concentrate on single words, but cannot recall words for continuous writing?
- What about the content, if you discount the spelling and presentation?
- What help do they need?
- Are there any strategies you use at home for learning spellings?

Maths

- What sort of errors do they make?
- Are there any everyday examples, eg with money?
- Is it a reading problem or a copying one?
- Is it a sequencing or ordering problem, eg do they forget processes half-way through?
- Is it a memory problem, eg tables?
- Is it a conceptual problem, eg spatial awareness?
- Are the problems different, eg is geometry (shapes) better than arithmetic?
- What sort of help do they need?
- Is there anything that works?

Memory

- How do they cope with being given instructions or remembering messages?
- Is there any difference between verbal or written instructions?

Don't forget to describe any problems with:

- behaviour, confidence and self-esteem;
- motor skills, eg clumsiness;
- speech or language skills, eg remembering the word they want to say.