



Dyslexia

Taking action
to support, empower and
unlock creative potential

 **Dyslexia Foundation**
of New Zealand

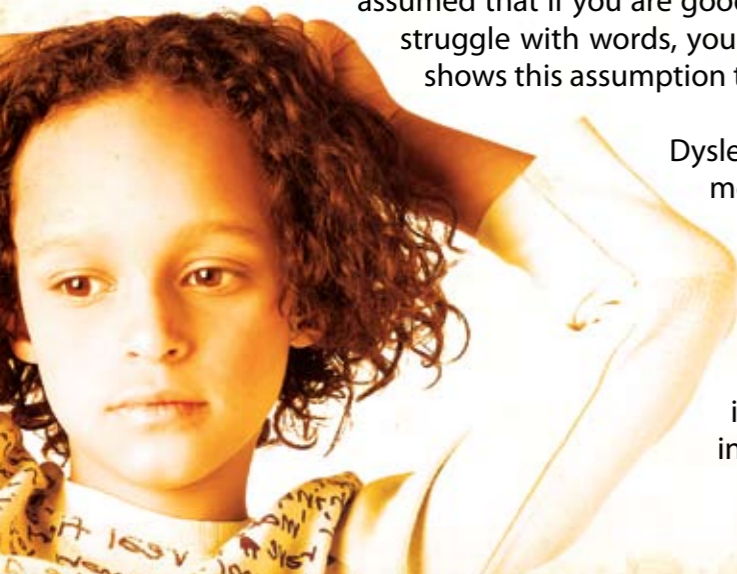
Recognition • Understanding • Action

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is an alternative way of thinking. It is hereditary, and has genetic causes. Brain research, including groundbreaking work from Auckland University, shows that while most of us use the 'verbal' left side of our brain to understand words, dyslexic people use the 'pictorial' right side – making them slower to process and understand language, but stronger in creative areas like problem solving, empathy, leadership and lateral thinking. Effective action unlocks potential and allows dyslexic individuals to access and use their talents.

These findings are confirmed and complemented by overseas research which focuses on the creative strengths which dyslexia can offer rather than viewing dyslexia as a literacy deficit. In our culture, it is assumed that if you are good with words, you are also highly intelligent and if you struggle with words, you must not be so smart. But the experience of dyslexia shows this assumption to be false.

Dyslexia impacts much more than literacy alone. While the most immediate characteristic is a problem in decoding words and their meanings, this is still only one aspect of a broader spectrum of difficulties such as auditory and visual perception, planning and organising, motor skills, short-term memory and concentration. Some of these can make it especially challenging for individuals to follow multiple instructions, turn thoughts into words and finish work on time.

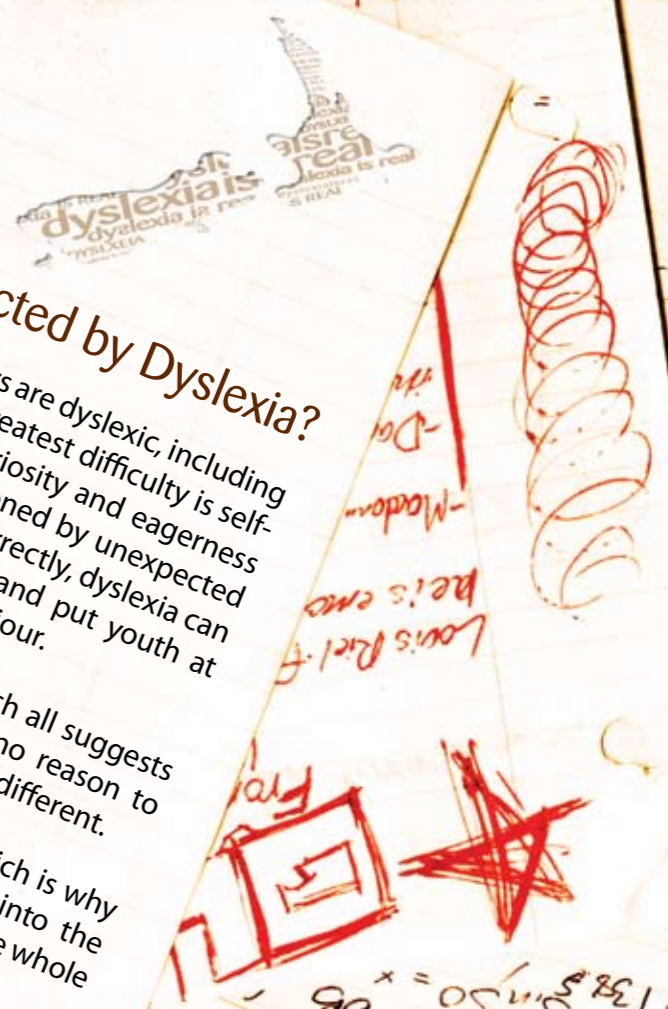


How many people are affected by Dyslexia?

An estimated one in ten New Zealanders are dyslexic, including over 70,000 schoolchildren. Dyslexia's greatest difficulty is self-esteem. Children begin school full of curiosity and eagerness to learn, but can quickly become disillusioned by unexpected failure in the classroom. If not addressed correctly, dyslexia can lead to alienation and disenfranchisement and put youth at risk, fuelling depression and anti-social behaviour.

Overseas, British, American and Swedish research all suggests 30-52% of prisoners are dyslexic, and there is no reason to suggest the New Zealand incidence would be any different.

Fundamentally, all of us are affected by dyslexia, which is why addressing dyslexia in the classroom, and through into the workplace is a very effective way of improving life for the whole community.



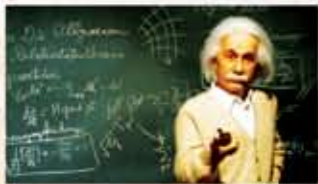
Unlocking the potential of Dyslexia

The upside of dyslexia is the ability to perceive the world from many perspectives, allowing special talents and skills to flourish in fields such as invention, the arts, design, engineering, and entrepreneurship.

Dyslexia must be supported in education and in the workplace, and this often requires specific interventions, as well as awareness and understanding. It is also important that dyslexic individuals are able to take responsibility for their unique way of thinking, turning it from an obstacle into an advantage. Successful dyslexics draw on their strengths to hit their targets in life.

Famous dyslexics who have unlocked their potential include historical figures as diverse as Leonardo da Vinci, Agatha Christie and John Lennon and international celebrities such as actors Tom Cruise and Robin Williams, entrepreneur Richard Branson, supermodel Jerry Hall and actress Keira Knightley. Here in New Zealand, creative leaders like Academy Award winner Richard Taylor, motivational speaker Billy Graham, renowned hair stylist Mike Hamel and the late maverick motorcycle designer John Britten all embraced this learning difference to become leaders in their field.

Famous dyslexic thinkers



Albert Einstein, Theoretical Physicist



Whoopi Goldberg, Actress



John Britten, Design Engineer



Richard Taylor, Weta Workshop

The importance of Action

- Yes, dyslexia does exist and it is widespread in society – so action to improve education and workplace outcomes is critical
- Yes, dyslexia offers creative talents – this is the potential to be harnessed
- Yes, unaddressed dyslexia leads to failure and poor self esteem which often results in behavioural and social problems – this is a powerful motivation to take action early on

Facts

Dyslexia IS an alternative way of thinking and seeing the world

Dyslexia IS a lifelong challenge

Dyslexic people DO think predominantly in pictures, not with the sounds of words

Dyslexia DOES tend to run in families

Dyslexia DOES affect both boys and girls

Myths

Dyslexia is NOT an illness or a disease

Dyslexic people are NOT less intelligent

Dyslexia does NOT only affect reading and writing

Dyslexia is NOT caused by brain or nerve damage

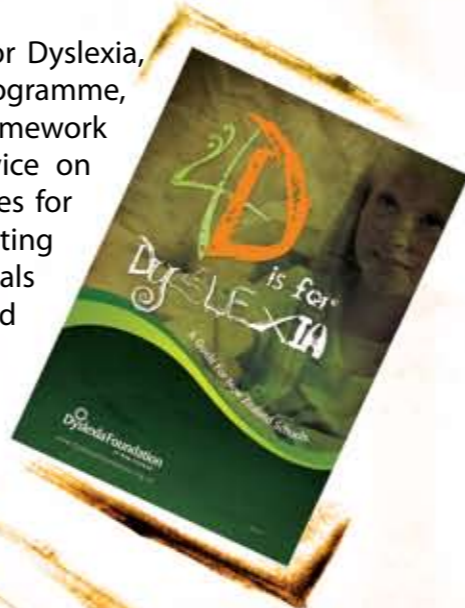
there are more
MANY MORE
like us



How teachers can help

Teachers play an essential role, both in identifying potentially dyslexic children and in creating an environment which helps them to learn effectively. There are many simple changes a teacher can make to the classroom to make life easier for pupils that learn differently. The Dyslexia Foundation has compiled a free handbook of these which is available at www.4Dschoools.org.nz.

The handbook is part of 4D | For Dyslexia, the Foundation's nationwide programme, which provides schools with a framework of resources, support and advice on improving educational outcomes for dyslexic pupils. Parents wanting to choose a school which deals positively with dyslexia should also visit the 4D website, where they'll find a list of schools nationwide which are part of this groundbreaking programme.



Dyslexia beyond the schoolyard

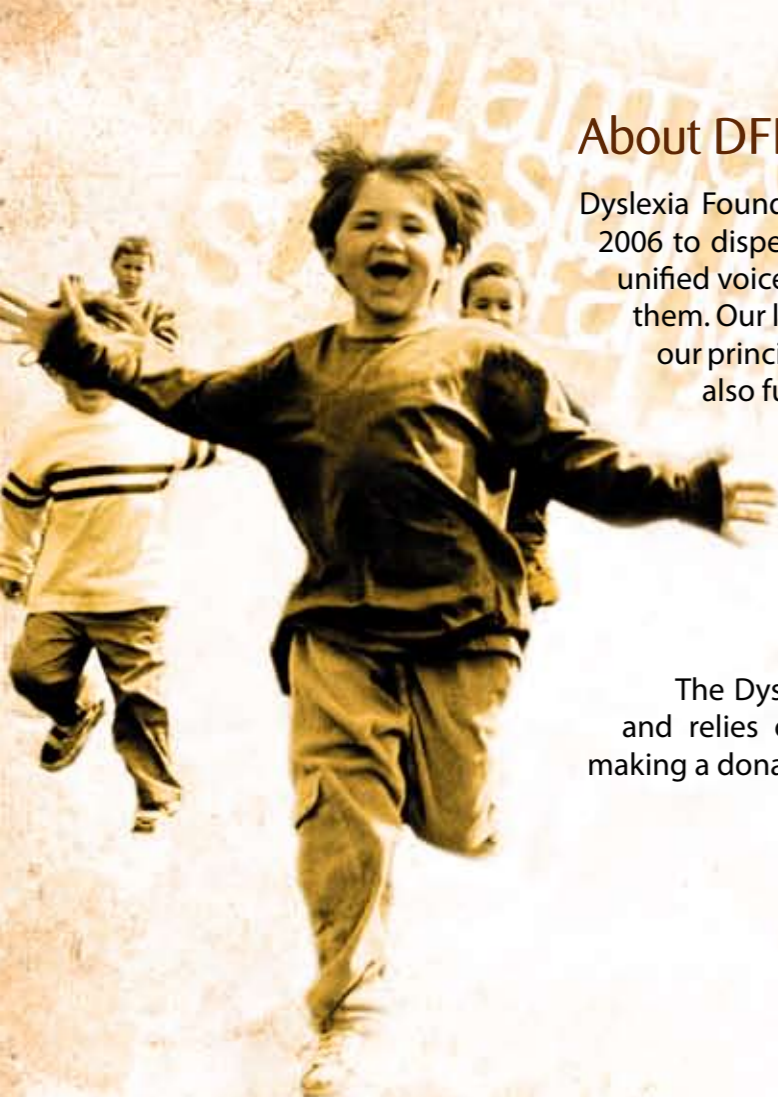
School is one place where dyslexic individuals need our understanding and help, but there are other places too. Families, for example, should keep a child's dyslexia in mind when giving instructions or helping with homework. Research shows that dyslexia is hereditary, so it may be that by finding out more about a child's dyslexia, further insights are gained about members of the extended family.

The workplace is another environment where understanding and recognition of dyslexia can yield positive results. While misunderstandings can reinforce low self-esteem and limit opportunities for both the dyslexic individual, and the business, recognising and harnessing talents and creative strengths has the potential to have powerful social and economic impacts. International research on the contributions dyslexics can make in the workplace and economy supports a 'paradigm' shift toward viewing dyslexia as having distinct abilities to offer.

To support the dyslexic people in your life, check out the resources listed on the back of this brochure. These will provide you with further information, as well as providing extensive resources to enable those who are dyslexic to harness their full potential.

*understand the way that we see the world
then lets create something great together*





About DFNZ

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) was formed in late 2006 to dispel the myths surrounding dyslexia and to provide a unified voice for dyslexic New Zealanders and those supporting them. Our launch was funded through the generous support of our principal sponsor, Cookie Time Charitable Trust, which has also funded several other key initiatives along the way.

Just six months after our launch, we were successful in having the New Zealand Government recognise dyslexia for the first time. Since then, we have been working hard to continue our mission.

The Dyslexia Foundation receives no Government funding and relies on the generosity of the community. Details on making a donation to DFNZ are on the back of this brochure.

*Its time
to take meaningful*
Action

The Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit

It can often be hard for people to truly understand what it feels like to be dyslexic. To provide insights into the dyslexic experience, and to challenge traditional views of it as a limitation or disability, the Cookie Time Charitable Trust commissioned the Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit, a public, outdoor gallery experience at 21 Worcester Boulevard, Christchurch.

The Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit provides knowledge, inspiration and encouragement by showcasing the achievements of four leading dyslexic thinkers: Lord of the Rings Academy Award winner Richard Taylor, the late maverick motorcycle designer John Britten, pioneering dyslexia innovator Ron Davis and sculptor Mackenzie Thorpe.

Since opening in 2007 the Dyslexia Discovery Exhibit has won a number of awards, including a silver medal at the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Awards, and Landscape of the Year at the 2008 Landscaping New Zealand Awards. Judges described the Exhibit as "inspirational and exquisitely executed, combining design finesse with sound construction techniques and exceptional attention to detail".

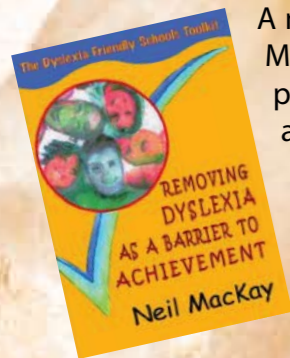


Further resources

Our challenge to parents, schools, Government and workplaces is to embrace, support and empower the people in your lives who are dyslexic. The following resources will help you to do this.

The DFNZ website is designed to provide the most comprehensive and up-to-date reference for information about dyslexia in New Zealand. It also provides an extensive listing of most of the providers of dyslexia assessment and assistance throughout New Zealand. We encourage those seeking assistance to speak with a range of organisations, and to seek out a variety of information and opinions about what type of programme would suit them, and their family, budget and timing constraints.

The first stop for information on dyslexia in New Zealand, including links to assessment and solution providers: www.dfnz.org.nz



A major contributor to DFNZ's 4D programme for schools, Neil Mackay is an international dyslexia consultant whose book provides information for teachers and other educators about improving the classroom environment for dyslexic learners, and for the rest of the class. You can purchase it at: www.aquilabooks.co.nz

Information for schools about joining the free 4D programme: www.4Dschoools.org.nz
General information about dyslexia, including research and tips for parents: www.dyslexia.yale.edu

Ministry of Education Resources: www.minedu.govt.nz, www.tki.org.nz
Specific links to resource materials are also available from www.4dschoools.org.nz

Contacting the Foundation

For all general enquiries relating to the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, email: info@dfnz.org.nz

To make a donation, go to www.dfnz.org.nz

Alternatively, simply send a cheque, made out to Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand, to our postal address:

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand
P.O. Box 16141, Hornby, Christchurch 8441
Fax: 03 365 1101

Principal sponsor

Cookie Time Charitable Trust
Helping NZ kids discover their gifts

www.ctct.org.nz



Make your voice heard

The logo for the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand features a stylized sunburst icon above the text. The text is arranged in three lines: "Dyslexia Foundation" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, "of New Zealand" in a smaller font below it, and the website address "www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz" in a similar font at the bottom.

Dyslexia Foundation
of New Zealand

www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz

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