

Support Organisations

Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI)

(See the section 'Addresses and Web Links' in The Library for contact details and websites.)

Founded in 1972, the DAI has thirty-five branches, each of which runs extra curricular literacy classes and functions as a parent support group. Membership consists of individuals with dyslexia, parents and interested professionals. A full-time administrator, a communication officer, secretarial help, and educational psychologists work at the national office in Dublin city centre, where psycho-educational assessment is offered for children and adults. Group or individual tuition in most areas of the country can be arranged for those who have been diagnosed with dyslexia. Summer schools and special exam-preparation classes are also offered. A full-time course for adults with dyslexia is run in conjunction with FAS, the Irish national training agency. This is the only course of its kind in Ireland and enables adults whose employment prospects have been hindered by dyslexia to acquire literacy and computer and other work-related skills.

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland has been providing in-service teacher training courses in the identification and treatment of dyslexia since 1979. This modular course has been updated and developed over the years and is taken by 400 teachers each year. New teaching programmes and approaches are evaluated and information circulated frequently to both parents and teachers. The Association offers a Tutorial Service at a number of third level institutions and a most heartening development is the increasing number of pupils with dyslexia successfully completing third level courses.

The DAI has spear-headed successful campaigns to exempt pupils with severe dyslexia from the state-required study of Irish as a second language and continues to press for appropriate special arrangements and accommodations for pupils in state exams.

Perhaps the most important function of the Association is that it provides a forum to express the needs of pupils and their parents, of adults with dyslexia, of concerned teachers at all levels and that it keeps the issue of dyslexia very much alive within the Irish education system. Information is disseminated through a quarterly newsletter, a website, occasional seminars and a triennial conference.

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland is a founder member of the European Dyslexia Association and of SPECTRUM, a national umbrella organisation of volunteer, non-profit associations concerned with specific learning difficulties.

Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support (DADS)

(See the section 'Addresses and Web Links' in The Library for contact details and websites.)

D.A.D.S – Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support is a Northern Ireland-based self-help support group for children who suffer from dyslexia, their parents and their teachers. Founded in 1998 the organisation now has more than one hundred affiliated families. Daily requests come from parents trying to negotiate the system, which many find both confusing and intimidating. We currently offer to accompany concerned parents to meeting with school psychologists and other interested parties and support and guide them through the process of assessments, reviews and statementing. We are planning formal training for these advocates.

D.A.D.S. continues to support parents, to help teachers and to provide a safe meeting place where often highly embarrassed people can speak openly and honestly.

D.A.D.S. has organised and funded training courses for both parents and teachers, empowering them to provide a better quality of learning for pupils with dyslexia. It has now been recommended that one teacher in every school should be trained to this certificate level.

D.A.D.S. has a wealth of experience at its disposal and has been actively involved researching best practice, best teaching methods, best teaching aids/resources and the latest research findings. The group has successfully sought funding to acquire a library of these aids/resources for use by parents, teachers and pupils. D.A.D.S. has taken children on residential weekends and other trips to improve their social interaction skills, confidence building and self-esteem.

D.A.D.S. aims to work with all sections of the community without fear or favour. The group will continue to try to be a positive force for action. The motto of D.A.D.S. remains "The Way Forward".

D.A.D.S. appreciates the opportunity to co-operate with the Psychology Service, the Inspectorate and the Department of Education and welcomes and endorses the latest findings published by the Working Party set up by the Minister in association with the southern Department of Education and Science.

In the future, parents, carers and children will be able to undergo training and information sessions in self-assertiveness, coping strategies, confidence building etc... Our Centre will be equipped with three new computers and the Internet. Voice activated packages will be available.

Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association (NIDA)

(See the section 'Addresses and Web Links' in The Library for contact details and websites.)

The Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association was formed over 25 years ago and was one of the founder members of the British Dyslexia Association.

The aims of the Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association include:

- encouraging local authorities to provide appropriate training opportunities for teachers at all levels
- encouraging the Department of Education to ensure rights of dyslexic learners are respected and upheld
- raising awareness throughout the community in the educational, social and both public and private employment sectors

- advising and supporting teachers, associated professionals, parents and learners

The Northern Ireland Dyslexia Association:

- organises a helpline facility, short courses and meetings for parents and teachers and a befriending service to parents negotiating with educational authorities
- supports the OCR Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties course as part of a commitment to increasing number of trained teachers/tutors in the Province
- holds monthly meetings in Belfast and elsewhere when possible
- maintains close link with the British Dyslexia Association with resultant access to information
- encourages and supports research through links with University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast

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