

# Interactions between parents and schools



The Human Cost of Dyslexia project was an amazing opportunity to bring together those impacted by dyslexia and the government legislators to gain a better understanding of the direct and indirect challenges and abilities of individuals with dyslexia. The aim was to ensure the understanding of the amazing contribution the dyslexic community makes.

“This report is difficult reading. Anecdotally, we have heard it all before, but to see in cold hard statistics through expert and individual evidence, that hundreds of thousands of kids are unnecessarily anxious and undervalued, and millions of parents are struggling to give their children the support they need, is hard reading. This issue strikes to the very core of humanity.”

Helen Boden, CEO British Dyslexia Association

The following are statistics and comments from the parental aspect of the study.

## Key findings:

- 70 percent of parents felt that their school did not support their child's dyslexia
- 74 percent of parents said they felt anxious when they had interactions with their child's school
- 70 percent of parents felt that their child's school did not take their concerns about dyslexia seriously

- 70 percent of parents said they felt disempowered during interactions with their child's school
- 76 percent of parents felt that the school was not doing a good job supporting their dyslexic child
- 72 percent of parents felt that their school did not value or nurture their child's abilities and potential
- 55 percent of parents felt they were unable to communicate effectively with their child's school
- 82 percent of parents said that they sometimes feel angry with their dyslexic child's school

Some parents noted that schools give misleading advice and appear to want to avoid potentially costly interventions.

"As a teacher, I'm told to tell parents that you cannot test for dyslexia and that parents need to pay privately if they wish, but we as a school don't have to follow private assessments. Parents are also told that it's not possible to recognise before seven years old."

The inconsistent information accessed by parents was reported as problematic, with some parents whose professional activities encompassed working with young people with dyslexia reporting that schools appeared to actively misinform parents about their children's needs. Other parents felt that schools did not know how to support parents and young people.

Despite explicit instruction within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015 and the Children & Families Act 2014 that the views of parents and young people are central to the development of provision for young people with SEND, our data shows that parents do not feel empowered to share their views and indeed that some parents felt that their opinions were disregarded by schools.

Interestingly, some parents were anxious that their children were not getting sufficient support. They felt that other 'needs' eclipsed those of young people with dyslexia.

"I could see that she was struggling but got fobbed off by the school that it was a phase and she would eventually get it. She is such an anxious and angry girl who hates school and has to be physically held some days to go in."

Sourced from: *The Human Cost of Dyslexia - April 2019*  
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