

The Dyslexia-Express©

How do you explain to a child, that has just heard that he/she has dyslexia, what is the matter? In most cases a child is told that he/she has a problem with reading and writing, but the child has more questions, like: Will it pass by? Is it contagious? Who's fault is it? What is wrong with me? Which effect has dyslexia on me? It is very important not to restrict the aid to children with dyslexia to the cognitive problems they face, but also to the social and emotional problems they encounter because of their learning disorder.

The Dyslexia-Express© concentrates itself on the social and emotional development of children with dyslexia. The child has to fully understand what is the matter, to cope with the problems he/she meets in education. The child needs individual support, understanding and help from his teacher and his peers. This all is of utmost value to accept his/ her problems.

The Dyslexia-Express© is a beautiful designed box and it is filled with a variety of materials.

The Dyslexia-Express© contains:

a book that explains dyslexia in a child-friendly way, a cd with the content of the book to listen to, a PowerPoint on cd to give a presentation to the family, neighbours or to friends, a game and a coaching book for teachers.

The book: "Tess en Stijn pimpen het plein"

Title translated from Dutch: Tess and Stijn pimp-up the playground of the school.

The book is written by Berdie Bartels, a Dutch writer with a lot of experience in writing children's literature and how to write for children with dyslexia.

The book is fun to read but serious at the same time. It's the core of the Dyslexie-Express. It's lay-out is made up according to dyslexia-friendly rules (off-white pages, dark-blue font colours, illustrations that support the text and don't interfere with the text, dyslexia friendly font (Arial 12), short lines, clear divisions).

Dyslexia is explained by use of trains, railways and stations. In the brain there are a lot of connections between brain cells to transport information from one cell to the other: stations connected by railways. With people without dyslexia these connections are straight fast railways that make it possible for trains to ride quickly from one station to the other in order to transport the information.

People with dyslexia don't have fast connections. The railways are curvy and therefore information is transported slow. The connections are insufficient. The trains arrive at their destination finally, but much slower. So reading and writing take a lot more time.

With the book comes an audio-cd, on which the story is read aloud. Children who have difficulties to read the book themselves can listen to the story.

In the manual is explained to teachers how to use the book and the cd. First step: first read the book yourself so you know what information the child receives.

The PowerPoint:

It is delivered on cd and it is open. That means the child can fill in the blank slides itself with his/her own information. Core of the PPT is the book. So the explanation about dyslexia is already filled in.

The coaching book for teachers: "Coachingsgesprekken met dyslectische kinderen"

Title translated from Dutch: Coaching conversation with children with dyslexia.

It is written by a Dutch coach, José van Loo, who has a lot of experience coaching children and has experience with dyslexia. Core of the book are the mind maps. Every chapter starts with a mind map. Some subjects are: Observation; set aims; questions to ask; how to involve parents. The book teaches teachers that dyslexia is more than a problem concerning reading and writing and what to do about that concept.

The Tricky-train-game:

This is a game for children with and without dyslexia to play together. It is developed by Jouke Korf, a young game-designer in the Netherlands.

It's a multi-sensorial game. This means that various senses are used in order to play the game. We also know that emotion plays a very important part in learning and remembering. To stay with the theme Trains and Railways, the game board shows railways and stations. In fact it is the playground in the book.

Centre of the game board is the HEART- station. In the corners we have the EAR-station, the EYE-station, the MOUTH-station and the HAND-station. The station cards contain words in 2 levels: easy and difficult. These words have to be discovered.

The game is played by 4 pupils at the same time. Each pupil plays a part every time. One has the turn and 2 others have to participate in guessing the word by using the skills their station requires. The 4th one is the stationmaster and checks if the word is explained properly and guessed right. This is called a cooperative game. The children in fact play against the game and they win or lose together. The game contains all kinds of troubles and/or escapes. That makes it fun to play and it lacks competition. Children explore their strong capacities and strengthen their weak capacities together. This is very important for children who think low of themselves, which is very common for children with a learning disability.

The game is not easy but very challenging. It takes about 45 min. to play, but it is not necessary to finish the game. The total of gained cards by all the players is the profit.

In practice it is observed that children can play the game alone after about 3 times played with help of the teacher.

Finally the Dyslexia-Express© and all the materials it contains is colourfully designed by Inge Nouws, youth-illustrator. It makes it very attractive for children to use.

Terry van de Beek-Nouws

Main developer and publisher of the Dyslexia-Express©

