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A Conversation Guide for Parents

Tips for Talking About Your Child's Diagnosis with Partners, Family, and Educators in a Grounded, Confident Way

Navigating conversations about your child's dyslexia diagnosis can feel overwhelming, especially when you're still processing it yourself. This guide offers practical, compassionate strategies to help you speak with clarity, confidence, and calm. Whether you're talking to your partner, extended family, or your child's school team, these tips will help you advocate effectively while honoring your child's unique strengths.

Talking With Your Partner

Goal: Stay connected and collaborative as you navigate next steps together.
Tips:

- Start with how you're feeling.
    - "This has been a lot to take in. How are you doing with it all?"
    - "I'm still trying to wrap my head around everything. Can we talk through what we've learned together?"

- Acknowledge different processing styles; one partner may want immediate action, the other may need time to reflect.
    - "I know we may be reacting to this differently, and that's okay."

- Align on shared priorities: emotional well-being, clarity on the plan, practical support
    - "What's most important to us right now: emotional support, school services, or just a plan to move forward?"

- Divide responsibilities: Who will handle follow-up with the evaluator? Who will talk to the school?
    - "Would you feel comfortable handling the school meeting? I'll follow up with the evaluator."

Talking with Family and Friends

Goal: Build understanding and ask for meaningful support without needing to explain everything.

Tips:

- Use simple, empowering language.
    - "Dyslexia just means his brain learns to read in a different way, and now we know how to help."
    - "He's just as smart and capable as ever. This diagnosis gives us the roadmap to help him thrive."

- Anticipate unhelpful comments (e.g., "He'll grow out of it!") and redirect with facts.
    - "Actually, dyslexia is a lifelong brain-based difference, but we're getting great support."
    - "We're focusing on what is working, and the good news is we have the right plan in place."

- Share how they can help: encouragement, patience, listening, or childcare during appointments

- Give them a resource to read or watch, such as information from the International Dyslexia Association or Understood.org.
    - "I'd love to send you a short article about dyslexia that helped me understand it better."
    - "This podcast helped me shift my perspective; it might help you, too."

Talking with Educators

Goal: Establish a collaborative, respectful relationship focused on support and solutions.

Tips:

- Lead with partnership:
    - "We're all here to help her thrive. Let's work together."
    - "We're all on the same team and I appreciate your role in helping her grow."
    - "We want to support what's happening at school and ensure she has what she needs to succeed."

- Be specific about what you're asking: clarity on services, reading intervention options, timeline
    - "Can we discuss what structured literacy support looks like at this school?"
    - "I'd like to understand the timeline for evaluations and services."

- Bring a short summary of the evaluation or your notes. (Use your *A Guide to Condensing Your Child's Psychoeducational Report* to be prepared with what you'll share.)
    - "Here's a short summary of her evaluation—it may help guide our conversation today."

- Document follow-ups. A kind, clear email after meetings can clarify expectations for everyone and make sure that mandated timelines are started, when applicable.
    - "Thank you again for today's meeting. Here's a quick summary of what we discussed and what our next steps are."

Other Helpful Statements

- “We’ve recently learned our child has dyslexia. That explains a lot, and now we know how to move forward.”

- “This doesn’t change how smart or capable they are. It just means they need a different kind of support to read and write effectively.”

- “We’re focusing on what’s working and building a plan that meets their needs.”
- “We’re really encouraged. There are effective interventions and we’re already taking action.”

- “We’re building a team of support around our child—thank you for being part of that.”

Are you looking for more support in navigating these important post diagnosis conversations? Reach out today to schedule a free consultation with dyslexia specialist Rebecca Bush.