



MEDIA RELEASE

Dyslexia Association of Singapore Embraces a New Era with Inclusive Education for those who Learn Differently

Extension of DAS' services to learners who fall through the cracks because they do not have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia and other special educational needs

SINGAPORE, 29 APRIL 2024 – In a significant move towards inclusivity, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) announces the expansion of its intervention services to embrace learners who are underserved because they do not have a formal diagnosis of special educational needs (SEN) such as dyslexia but exhibit similar learning differences.

This transformative initiative underscores DAS's commitment to provide a holistic and inclusive learning environment for all students facing educational challenges anchored upon a recognised profiling framework.

Breaking Barriers: A Shift in Access to DAS Programmes

Traditionally known for its expertise in supporting individuals with dyslexia and other related SENs, DAS recognises the broader spectrum of learners experiencing challenges in various aspects of education. DAS will extend its proven programmes to learners who would otherwise be turned away due to the lack of a formal diagnosis of an SEN.

According to [recent research](#), diverse learners may be excluded from receiving targeted support or government subsidies, despite forming a significant fraction of Singapore's student population.

Going Beyond Formal Diagnosis

DAS acknowledges that learning differences extend beyond specific diagnoses. Many students grapple with literacy, numeracy, executive functioning or attention-related issues without a formal identification. Out of 10 students who go through dyslexia assessments at DAS, three do not attain a dyslexia diagnosis and 50% of these would benefit from intervention.

The parents of these students often ask, "I had approached the DAS because my child exhibits learning differences similar to those of dyslexia but they could not support my child due to lack of a formal diagnosis. Where do I go now to seek help?" By widening access, DAS aims to be a beacon of support for this diverse group of learners.

Access through Assessments or Response to Intervention (RTI): A Dynamic Approach

Children who wish to access DAS programmes are encouraged to undergo a full psychological assessment, which aims to identify their unique learning profile. While assessments may not always result in a definitive diagnosis, they provide comprehensive insights into the individual's strengths and weaknesses. This data is invaluable for tailoring interventions and support strategies to meet the specific



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needs of the child. The assessment process offers highly relevant information that enhances the effectiveness of intervention by providing detailed recommendations for support and intervention based on the individual's learning profile.

These children may also undergo a "Response to Intervention" (RTI) pathway whereby DAS will use profiling tests and class observation to understand the unique challenges of each student.

The RTI model is a multi-tiered framework designed to identify and support students who learn differently, including those without a formal diagnosis. Its comprehensive approach encompasses screening and profiling, intervention to narrow gaps in learning and progress monitoring for educators to adapt the intervention according to the learner's development to maximise meaningful growth.

This personalised approach ensures the appropriate placement of learners in specific DAS programmes, facilitating targeted and effective interventions in a manageable manner for learners.

Upon proceeding to intervention following RTI tests, these students may be required to pursue an assessment to maximise learning outcomes.

Multidisciplinary Support and Collaborative Learning

DAS boasts a multidisciplinary team comprising psychologists, speech and language therapists, educational therapists and more. This collaborative approach enables in-depth guidance, case management discussions and a collective effort to address learning challenges comprehensively.

Empowering Learners through Orton-Gillingham approach

DAS's structured and evidence-based approach, rooted in Orton-Gillingham (OG) principles, forms the cornerstone of its interventions. The OG method emphasises a language-based, multisensory and diagnostic approach to empower learners, making learning an enriching and joyful experience. OG is recognised by the International Dyslexia Association as the most effective intervention programme for students who learn differently in the area of literacy. Together with the use of broader-based Science of Reading and Learning, OG benefit the majority of students who learn differently.

Financial Support for Individuals Who Learn Differently

DAS is actively raising financial support for those who learn differently and do not qualify for funding from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the Main Literacy Programme (MLP), as well as provide financial assistance for other programmes offered by DAS to support them. To augment its Bursary Fund for this diverse group of learners, DAS will be holding a Charity Golf & Dinner at Laguna National Golf Resort Club on 11 October 2024, with Ms Jane Ittogi as the guest-of-honour.

Looking Ahead: Unleashing Potential, Transforming Lives

As DAS expands its criteria for programme access, it invites those who learn differently and their families to join this transformative journey. DAS remains steadfast in its mission to empower every learner to reach their full potential, with or without a formal diagnosis of a learning difference.



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“While some students may receive a formal diagnosis of a learning difference, others may not meet all the diagnostic criteria but face similar difficulties in learning and still require additional support to achieve. DAS is dedicated to providing tailored intervention to students who learn differently so that instead of falling through the cracks, they are empowered with the required tools and strategies to achieve their true potential,” said Mr. Lee Siang, CEO of DAS.

Please visit www.das.org.sg/learning-differently for more information and to schedule a free consultation.

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ABOUT DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE (DAS)

Registered in 1991, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is today a vibrant Social Service Agency with almost 300 full-time and part-time staff who provide a wide range of programmes for individuals who learn differently, including persons with dyslexia and specific learning differences (SpLDs) in Singapore. DAS Educational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Specialist Psychologists provide services to over 3,500 preschool, primary and secondary school students in 12 centres all over Singapore.

DAS recognises that children who struggle to learn, including those with dyslexia and SpLDs, require a comprehensive and holistic range of programmes and services. Our SpLD Assessment Services, the DAS assessment arm, conducts assessments in areas such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), school readiness and more. These assessments provide valuable insights into each student's learning profile, enabling us to tailor interventions and support strategies accordingly.

The Main Literacy Programme (MLP), partially funded by the Ministry of Education, is a cornerstone of our efforts, supporting over 3,000 primary and secondary students. This programme delivers critical interventions in reading fluency, comprehension, spelling and writing, empowering students to develop essential literacy skills. In addition to MLP, our English Language and Literacy Division offers specialised programmes to enhance English literacy skills across all levels of education. Our iReaCH™ programme focuses on improving reading comprehension and writing skills for students from Primary 1 to Secondary 5. Meanwhile, our iStudySmart™ programme aims to empower individuals who learn differently with essential skills for success in higher education and beyond. From Secondary 3 onwards, students can benefit from this programme, which covers time management, prioritisation, planning, organisation, tertiary writing and presentation skills.

Furthermore, through our Specialised Educational Services (SES) Division, DAS provides support in Mathematics, Chinese, Science and Speech and Language Therapy. We also offer programmes in non-academic pursuits such as Speech and Drama and ArtVenture, enriching students' learning experiences and fostering holistic development.

Increasingly, DAS provides support for individuals who learn differently, including those with dyslexia, impacted by other SpLDs such as ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and non-verbal learning differences.



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Young adults in Institutes of Higher Learning can access assessment and specialist tutoring services to support their educational journey.

Presently, DAS needs to raise almost \$3 million each year to provide bursaries for its lower-income students and reduce the need to increase programme fees.

The DAS training arm, DAS Academy, provides certificate courses, diploma and master's level courses for the professional development of special needs, mainstream teachers and other educational professionals. This includes a diploma accredited by the International Dyslexia Association, the only course outside the United States to receive this honour. The aim is to build a pool of expertise in Singapore for the support of students with learning differences. DAS Academy also offers courses and workshops for parents and caregivers.

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