How Parents Can Help

* Read to your child – as often and for as long as possible. The benefits of this are enormous. The child will:
  + develop a larger vocabulary,
  + hear words pronounced properly and punctuation marked,
  + learn to enjoy books,
  + keep up-to-date on books peers are reading,
  + enjoy an activity without pressure.
* Read with your child. Paired Reading is a wonderful technique which encourages reading for pleasure and meaning.
* Talk to your child – about this and that, everything and anything, just chat.  So much of family life is taken up with organising – getting meals ready, collecting and delivering children from activities, that time for chatting can get lost. Just as adolescents need time to sit and talk with their friends, it is important for them also to have time to chat with parents. If this chatting is not part of the younger child’s life then it certainly will not happen in teenage years. It is very important to keep in touch with how a young person with dyslexia is coping, because dyslexia affects the whole personality, not just schoolwork.
* Listen to your child.  Learn to hear what the child is saying and note what is not being said. Pick up on tone of voice indicating possible worries. Ask open questions, e.g. “How do you feel about that?” or “What do you think of that?”
* Play games together – from “I spy” with your young child, to memory games, draughts, chess, and monopoly. With younger children saying nursery rhymes, tapping out rhythms, singing memory songs (e.g. Old McDonald Had A Farm) are all very useful. Never underestimate the amount of learning a child does simply by being with you and observing. Parents are the most important teachers of their children but not necessarily in formal teaching – the informal teaching is equally effective.
* A good method to help with the learning of spellings is the SOS Spelling Method. It is a good multi-sensory approach to learning spellings, which incorporates a lot of over learning, and is very effective.

