

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD WITH DYSGRAPHIA

A PARENT GUIDE

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# What Is Dysgraphia?

- Dysgraphia is a learning difference that affects written expression. It can impact:
  - Handwriting (legibility, letter formation, spacing)
  - Spelling (inconsistent, phonetic, or visually inaccurate spelling)
  - Getting thoughts on paper (organization, grammar, sentence structure)
- It's not about intelligence. Children with dysgraphia often have lots of ideas and great verbal skills, but struggle with writing tasks.

## Signs to Look For (Elementary Age)

| Area           | Signs that May Suggest Dysgraphia   |
|----------------|---|
| Handwriting    | Messy, hard-to-read handwriting, inconsistent spacing, frequent letter reversals past 1st grade, complaints of hand pain or fatigue |
| Spelling       | Spells the same word differently in one paragraph, struggles with common sight words, phonetic errors                               |
| Writing Output | Struggles to get ideas on paper, writes much less than they can say, avoids writing tasks, takes excessive time                     |
| Organization   | Written work lacks flow, jumbled sentences, no clear beginning-middle-end, difficulty with planning                                 |
| Emotional      | High frustration around writing, avoids written assignments, low confidence   |

# How You Can Support at Home

## Multisensory Writing Practice

- Use sand trays, chalk, playdough, shaving cream for tactile writing practice
- Air-writing, tracing big letters with body movements

## Fine Motor Strengthening

- Fun activities: playdough, Lego, beading, cutting, squeezing stress balls

## Spelling Practice

- Movement-based spelling (clapping syllables, jumping for each letter)
- Games like Bananagrams, Word Boggle, magnetic letters

## Writing Supports

- Complete a brain dump
- Use graphic organizers for planning
- Allow dictation before writing, or speech-to-text tools
- Practice typing, often easier than handwriting

## Writing Fun & Low-Pressure Activities

- Comic strips, caption games, story dice
- Keep writing short, fun, and connected to their interests

# Resources to Explore

| Resource   | Why It's Helpful  |
|--|---|
| <a href="#"><u>Understood.org</u></a>            | Clear parent-friendly explanations  |
| <a href="#"><u>The OT Toolbox</u></a>            | Fun, fine motor and multi-sensory writing activities  |
| <a href="#"><u>Handwriting Without Tears</u></a> | Structured handwriting program  |
| <a href="#"><u>Typing Club</u></a>               | Free typing practice tools  |
| <a href="#"><u>Book Creator</u></a>              | Create simple digital books for writing practice  |
| <a href="#"><u>The Writing Revolution</u></a>    | Practical writing approach that starts with simple sentence-level skills and builds up to structured paragraphs; includes lots of graphic organizers and clear scaffolds to help children organize their thoughts |

## Helpful Accommodations to Know

- At School: Extra time, typing instead of handwriting, oral responses, reduced writing demands, content-focused grading, speech to text
- At Home: Use alternatives like typing, drawing, or verbal storytelling for long assignments

# Using Elkonin Boxes for Spelling Support

## What are Elkonin Boxes?

Elkonin boxes are visual tools that help children segment words into individual sounds (phonemes). Each sound is placed in its own box, helping kids slow down and map sounds to letters. This is great for children with dysgraphia who have trouble remembering spelling patterns and writing clearly.

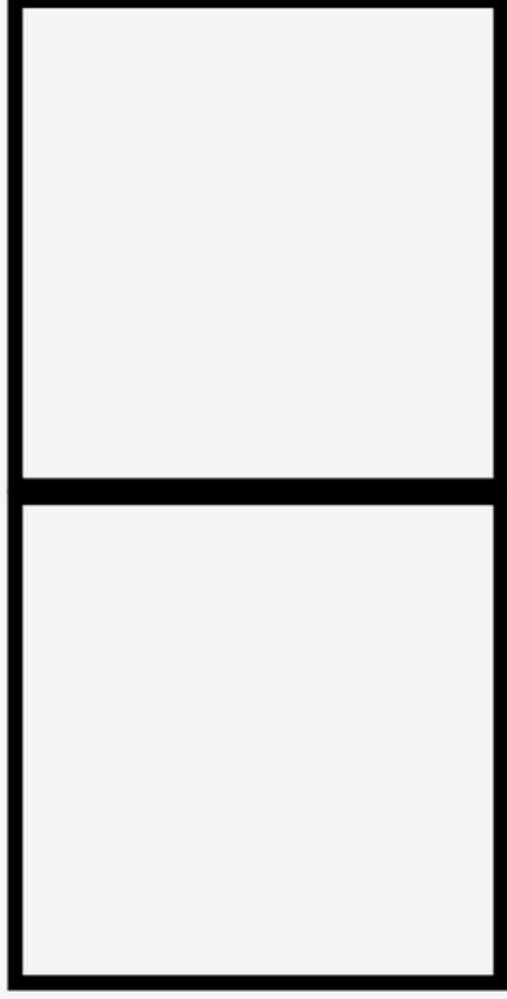
## Why They Work

- Help kids hear and feel the sounds in a word before writing
- Reduce the mental load by breaking words into smaller parts
- Provide a visual and structured way to practice spelling
- Can be used with letter tiles, magnets, or just drawn on paper

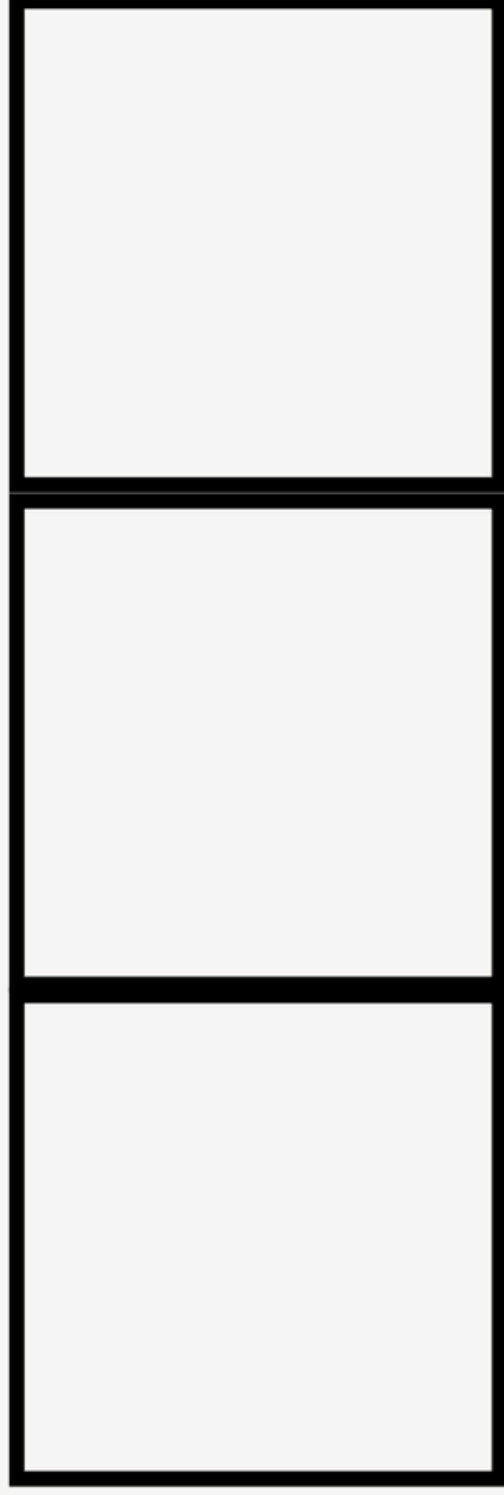
## How to Use Them

1. Say the word slowly (e.g., “ship”).
2. Draw a box for each sound (e.g., /sh/ /i/ /p/ → 3 boxes).
3. Have your child tap, slide counters, or place tiles as they say each sound.
4. Write the letter(s) in each box that represent the sound.
5. Blend the sounds together and read the word.

# Elkonin / Sound Boxes



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# Elkonin / Sound Boxes

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Please do not hesitate to reach out, should you have any questions or need additional support.

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