

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
Understood.org	Clear parent-friendly explanations
The OT Toolbox	Fun, fine motor and multi-sensory writing activities
Handwriting Without Tears	Structured handwriting program
Typing Club	Free typing practice tools
Book Creator	Create simple digital books for writing practice
The Writing Revolution	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.

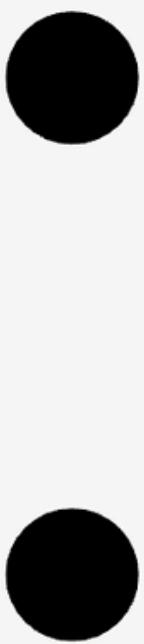
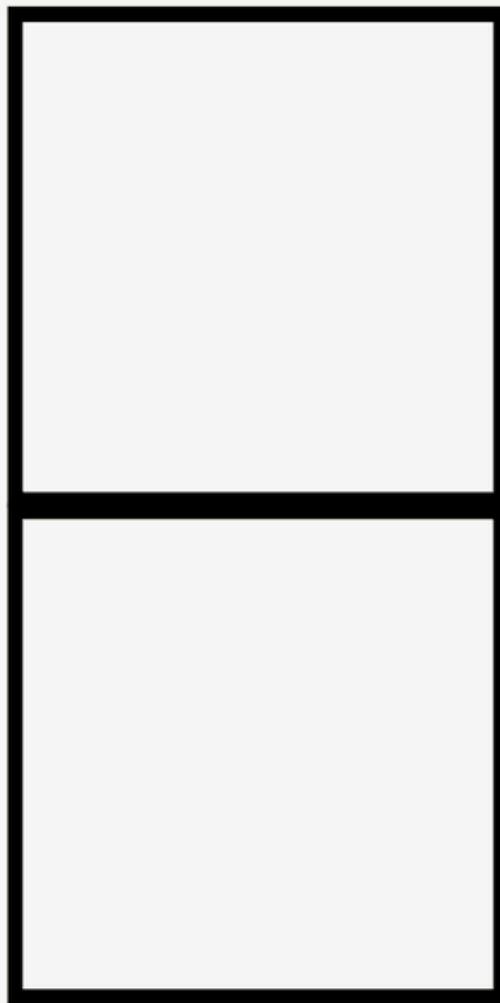
Why They Work

- 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

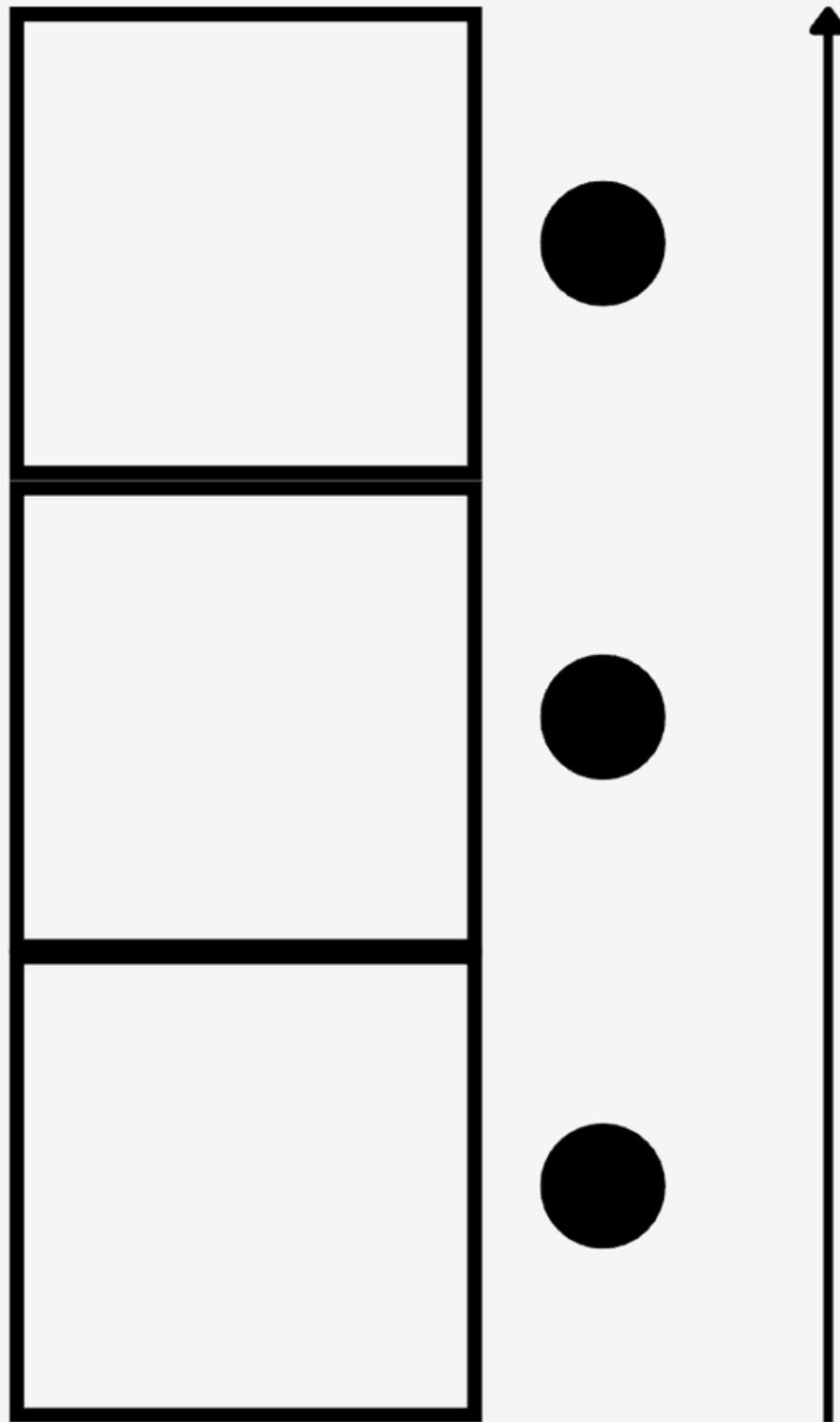
How to Use Them

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.

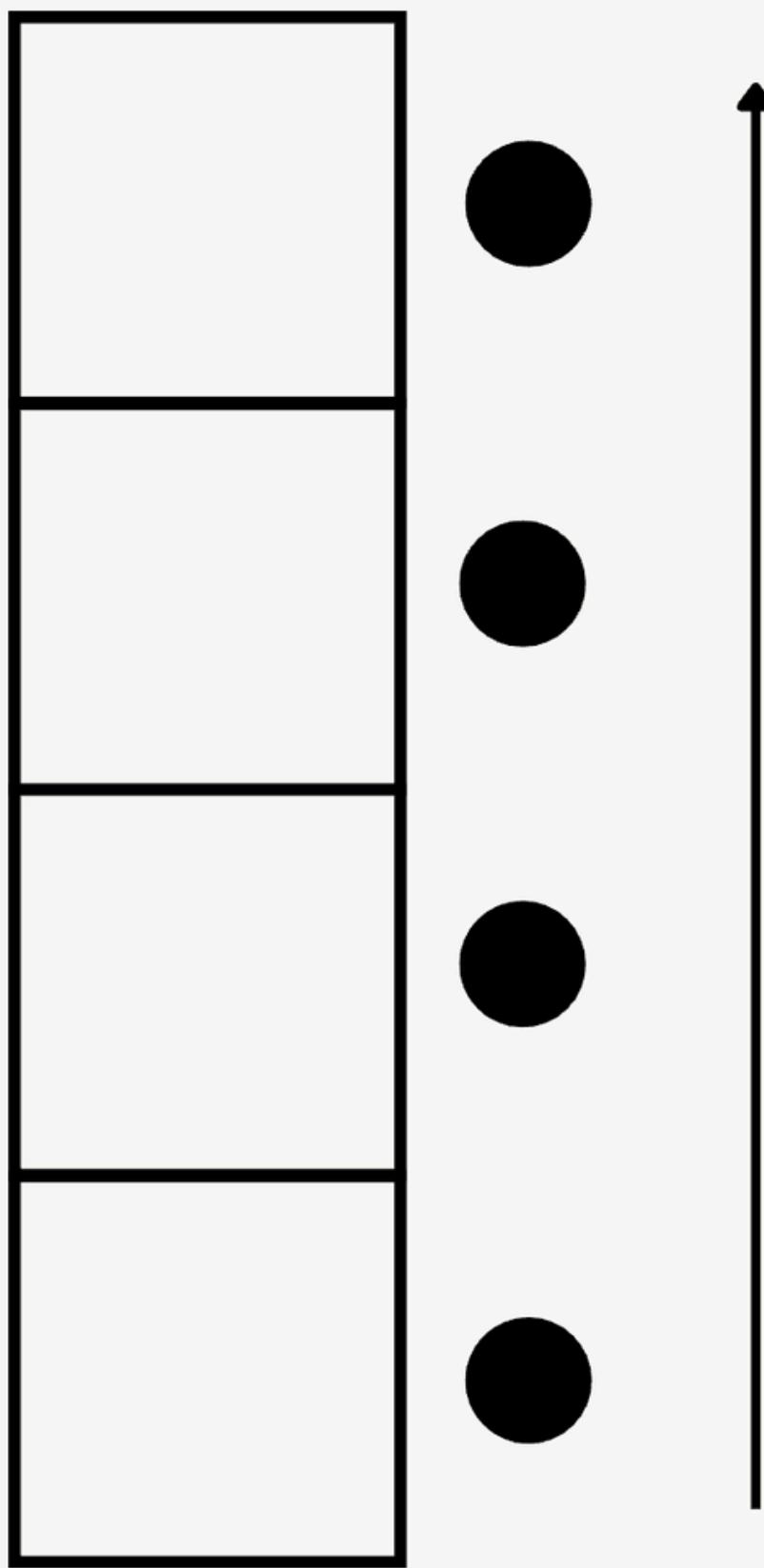
Elkonin/Sound Boxes



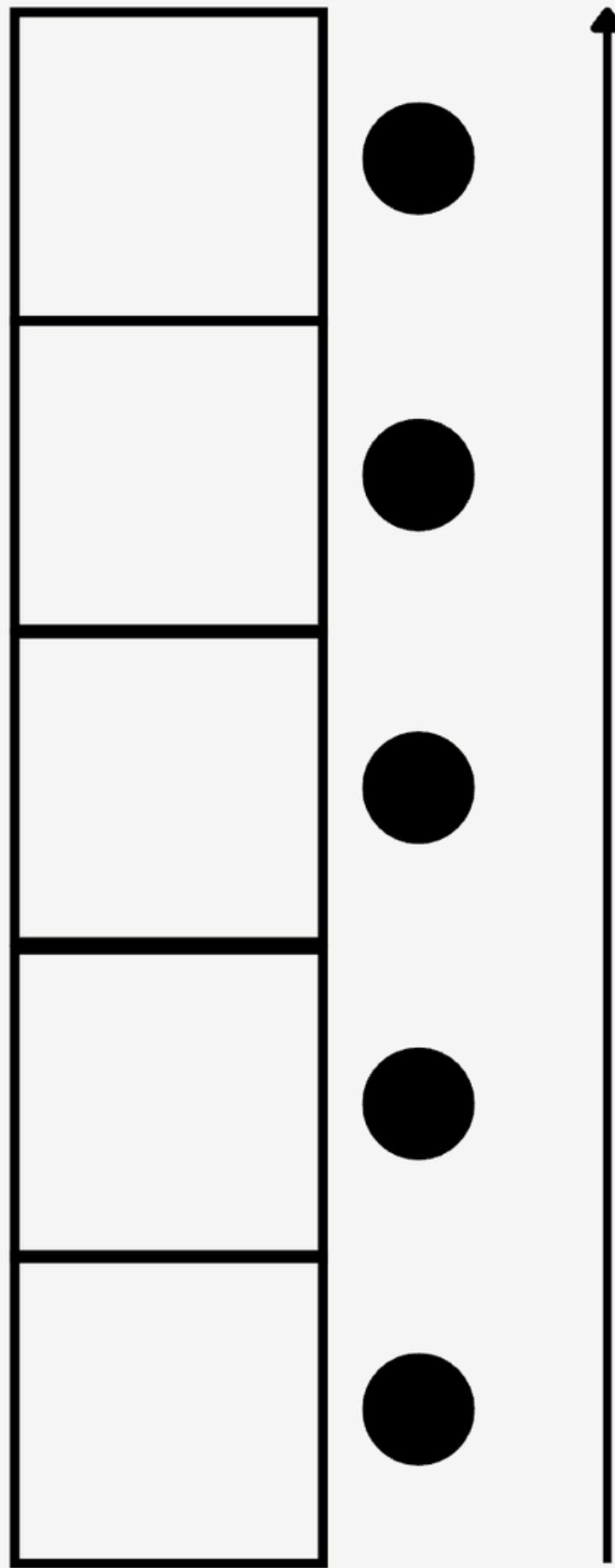
Elkonin/Sound Boxes



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

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