1. Remind your child that they learn in a different way to others, if they become upset or frustrated at their learning style. Sometimes dyslexic children will think that they are slower or less intelligent when in fact they just have a different way of processing the things they are learning.

2. Highlight their strengths. Very often we get hung up on the idea of children being smoothly rounded in all areas of their learning and development, but in reality people have strengths in some areas more than others. If they have difficulties in one area, make sure that you have just as much conversation (if not more) about the subjects or skills they are gifted at. These skills may not be academic in the usual sense and that is fine too.

3. Tell them about success stories. There are many well-known people who have achieved great things in their lives and who also have dyslexia. Typically these people are creatives, visionaries and pioneers in their chosen field. Our world would be a dull place without them.

4. If your child has a sensory preference (for example they are highly visual), get them to take information that they hear (for example in the classroom from their teacher) and imagine it in their mind (see pictures of it) if they find that they are disengaging from the verbal instructions/information. You can practice this at home by asking them to picture things that you say or if their sensory preference was kinaesthetic then they can take a moment to get in touch with their feeling or imagine how they would feel going through the process that the teacher is describing. Sensory games are great at helping your child translate information that is outside of their sensory preference into their sensory preference so that they can engage with it.

5. Point out how much your child has achieved already in their life. There was a time that they couldn’t walk, talk or hold a pencil. If they learned these skills then they can learn other skills in the future too.

6. Give your child down time. If you are concerned about your child keeping up in the classroom it can be tempting to invest lots of time and energy into helping them catch up by having extra lessons, tuition and setting them extra work to do at home. If your child feels as if they are missing out on fun or downtime they may become resistant to the learning opportunities you are giving them. Make sure you talk to them about how they feel about any extracurricular tasks you are providing and make sure that they still get time to relax.

7. Do help your child to feel fully supported in their learning and development by showing an interest in their school work. Work alongside them as they do their homework and give them positive and constructive feedback on how they are progressing. When you show an interest your child will feel more supported and their confidence and self-esteem will grow as a result.

By Gemma Bailey