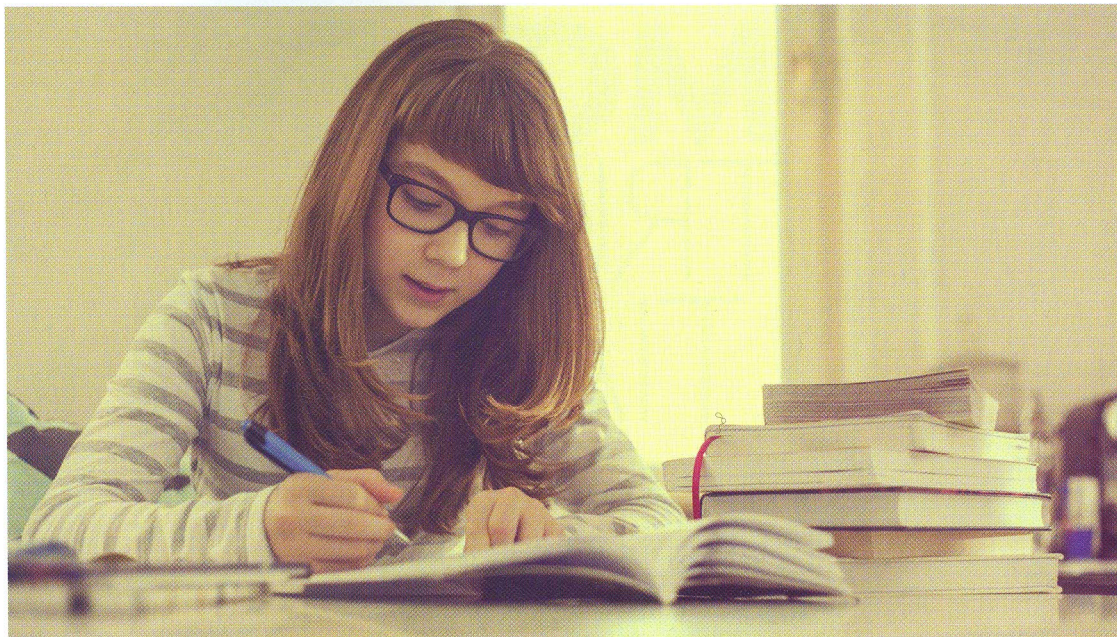


W

e've all

been there – no matter how much effort your child puts in to revision, the test results do not match the fervour with which they prepared. But with determination there are ways that you can both help change this, and with GCSE and A-level exams looming, the Christmas holidays are the perfect time to capitalise on the extra hours.



Playing to Strengths

Start by working out what your child's strengths are and use them to play to their weaker areas. It's worth noting that GCHQ has begun recruiting dyslexics and dyspraxics because they bring a different way of looking at the world.

Take Francis Holland School pupil Cordelia, aged 11, she is charming, sporty, and very bright. But spelling and reading foxed her and her self-belief was affected because of it. In her lessons she used a variety of things to help: played games, devised songs, drew letters in colour and sand, made illustrations, cards. And her marks slowly improved.

Don't Panic

Avoid frustration and panic by checking they have the right kit, books and notes for the holidays. Fill in any gaps before the end of term. Useful stocking fillers? Coloured felt tips, A3 coloured card, or even an indispensable mini hole punch (they may not thank you at the time!)

Suggest your child uses audiobooks to access class

texts if reading is weak, and follow along in the book. Watch a live production of the play, or download a film version. Make a Mind Map of each chapter; the plot; the characters; the action; and key quotes. Be active! Highlighting is not enough. Dyslexic learners need to "get it off the page" and turn key information into another form – a flow chart; a sequence of pictures with captions; a song; a Venn diagram; a series of big and small index cards; some Pelmanism cards with key words to match to definitions.

You could offer to share the burden – take part of a topic and prepare a presentation on it while your child does the same, and "teach" it to one another. Or read their science book aloud to them leaving a

"beep" for a key word they have to supply.

Inspiration Mind Mapping programme turns Mind Maps into an essay outline, and has templates for note taking and essay planning. I-Note facilitates note taking, information storage, and essay planning. If note taking proves difficult, you could suggest that their teacher might provide a print out of notes or PowerPoint at the start of the lesson, to annotate.

Plan Ahead

Revision without enough time is stressful. Encourage your child to review work as they go along at the end of a topic. They should read through material as they file it and ask for clarification if unsure. This is easier after a week or two, rather than just before an end

of term test. Make sure your child knows when tests and hand-in dates are.

During the Christmas holidays they can make a revision schedule. Do not expect them to work all day every day – four to five hours is ideal. Help your child divide their day into four: morning, early afternoon, late afternoon and evening and they should only work for two of these sessions. Remember to suggest they take short breaks of no more than five minutes.

It won't always be easy, but it will always be worth it. Look for the positives, praise even small gains. Enjoy the successes. A little bit of encouragement can go a long way. Being able to spell unique is one thing, your child knowing they are unique is quite another. ♥



What works for you? Tweet us your tips... @ISPparent

REVISION TIPS

The learning enhancement department at Francis Holland School, Regent's Park, advises on how to make the most of your study time this Christmas