

The Davis Young Learner Programme

The Davis Young Learner Programme is designed for younger children, under 8 years of age, typically before or at the very early stages of formal reading, writing, and maths.

At this stage, the aim is not to “fix” a problem, but to build the foundations that prevent difficulties from developing in the first place.

Can It Prevent Dyslexia from Becoming an Issue?

In many cases, yes.

From a Davis perspective, dyslexia develops when a child repeatedly experiences confusion with symbols that have little or no meaning—such as letters, words, or numbers. When this confusion leads to disorientation, it can create the distortions and inconsistencies we recognise as dyslexic symptoms.

The Young Learner Programme works by addressing this before it becomes a pattern.

How Does It Do This?

The programme focuses on helping the child:

1. Develop Awareness and Control

Children are gently introduced to simple tools that help them:

- Stay **present and focused**
- Notice when they feel confused
- Regain clarity quickly

2. Create Meaning for Symbols

Rather than asking a child to memorise letters or words, the programme helps them:

- Understand what symbols represent
- Connect learning to real meaning and experience

This reduces the likelihood of confusion when they later encounter reading, writing, and maths.

4. Support a Positive Relationship with Learning

Because the child is working at a level that makes sense to them:

- Learning feels achievable and enjoyable
- Confidence is built early
- There is less need to develop coping strategies

What Is It For?

The Young Learner Programme is ideal for children who:

- Are not yet reading, or are just beginning or
- Show signs of confusion, frustration, or avoidance
- Are highly imaginative or visual thinkers
- May be at risk of developing learning difficulties because a parent or relative is dyslexic.

How Does It Help Long Term?

By building strong conceptual foundations and giving the child tools to manage confusion, the programme helps ensure that:

- Learning develops from understanding, not memorisation
- Skills become reliable and consistent
- The child maintains confidence in their own thinking

In Summary

The Davis Young Learner Programme is about getting in early.

Instead of waiting for difficulties to appear and then trying to resolve them, it supports the child in developing the clarity, concepts, and confidence that allow learning to unfold naturally.

Key Evidence

1. Early, effective teaching can *prevent dyslexia in many cases*

The National Center on Improving Literacy states:

Early intervention is so important because **“in many instances, with effective instruction, we can prevent dyslexia.”**

2. Timing matters: earlier = significantly better outcomes

Research shows:

- Interventions in Years 1–2 are almost twice as effective as later intervention
- Early support allows the brain to develop automatic reading systems before difficulties become embedded

This supports the idea that dyslexia is not fixed—it develops over time if not addressed.

3. Early intervention can reduce or even remove observable difficulties

Research indicates:

- Early, targeted instruction can **“shrink the gap... so much that it doesn’t appear on diagnostic tests”**

In practical terms: the child may no longer *present as dyslexic* in measurable ways.

4. Preventative approaches in early years show measurable impact

Studies on at-risk children show:

- Training in early skills can reduce later reading problems
- Davis programmes aim specifically to prevent reading difficulties before they emerge

5. With the right support, outcomes can be normalised

Research consistently shows:

- Early, structured support can help children **develop reading skills in line with peers**
- Many learners can achieve **age-appropriate literacy and long-term success**

Dyslexia does not have to become a significant issue if it is addressed early and taught in a way that builds real understanding.