



Lewisville ISD | Dyslexia Family Handbook

and Related Disorders

What is Dyslexia?



“Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
“Related disorders” include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)
<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>



The International Dyslexia Association defines “dyslexia” in the following way:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.



“One thing we know for certain about dyslexia is that this is one small area of difficulty in a sea of strengths..” -Sally Shaywitz

Dyslexia Characteristics

Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Consequences may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties in phonological awareness are unexpected for the student's age and educational level and are not primarily the result of language difference factors. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

The following are the primary reading/spelling characteristics of dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Difficulty spelling

Dyslexia is NOT the result of low intelligence. However, an unexpected gap exists between learning aptitude and achievement in school. The student's difficulties in the area of language, specifically the printed word, are "unexpected" in relation to other cognitive abilities. The problem is not behavioral, psychological, motivational, or social. It is not a problem with vision.

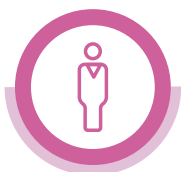
It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed above.



While dyslexia can make reading more difficult, with the right instruction, individuals with dyslexia can learn to read. Many people with dyslexia have gone on to accomplish great things. While the school years can be challenging for dyslexic students, their exceptional gifts and talents have made them some of the most successful people in the world. Dyslexia is a learning difference that may be accompanied by impressive strengths.



People with dyslexia are unique; each having individual strengths and weaknesses. Many dyslexics are creative, persistent and have strong reasoning skills. They can have talents in areas such as art, athletics, architecture, graphics, electronics, mechanics, drama, technology, music, engineering, or leadership. Dyslexics often show special talent in areas that require visual, spatial, and motor integration.



It is important for educators and families of people with dyslexia to support the strengths and interests of a dyslexic learner. Help the dyslexic learner to dream and set goals for themselves. Remind them that while they may face challenges academically, they are made for so much more than grades and test scores. Help them to celebrate their strengths and exercise grit in learning to overcome the challenges of reading.

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

The following behaviors may be risk factors associated with dyslexia, if they are unexpected for an individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities. A student with dyslexia usually exhibits several of these behaviors that persist over time and interfere with his/her learning. A family history of dyslexia may be present; in fact, recent studies reveal that the whole spectrum of reading disabilities is strongly determined by genetic predispositions (inherited aptitudes) (Olson, Keenan, Byrne, & Samuelsson, 2014).

Preschool

- Delay in learning to talk
- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., "pusgetti" for "spaghetti," "mawn lower" for "lawn mower")
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty in adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/ her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn't enjoy following along if book is read aloud)

Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts (syllables) (e.g., "baseball" can be pulled apart into "base" "ball" or "napkin" can be pulled apart into "nap" "kin")
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., "man" sounded out as /m/ /?/ /n/)
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., "sed" for "said")

Second Grade - Third Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., "to," "said," "been")
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., "after" spelled "eftr")
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (e.g., particularly for pleasure)
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., "big" instead of "enormous")
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

Middle School and High School

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Components of Dyslexia Instruction

Dyslexia instruction and intervention implemented in LISD follows a research based instructional model for students identified with dyslexia. LISD implements TEA guidelines for specialized instruction including: phonological awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and fluency.

While it is necessary that students are provided instruction in the above content, it is also critical that the way in which the content is delivered be consistent with research-based practices. Principles of effective intervention for students with dyslexia include all of the following:



Simultaneous, multisensory

(VAKT) Multisensory instruction incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile)during teacher presentation and student practice.



Diagnostic teaching to automaticity

Diagnostic teaching is based on continual and careful assessment of students' needs. The content taught must be mastered to the degree of automaticity. When a reading skill becomes automatic it is performed quickly in an efficient manner.

Systematic and Cumulative

This type of instruction requires that the organization of material follow the order of the language. The sequence begins with the easiest concepts and most basic elements and progresses to more difficult material. Each step must also be based on something already learned. Concepts must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory.

Synthetic instruction

Synthetic instruction starts with the smallest parts of the language and teaches how the parts work together to form a whole.

Analytic instruction

Analytic instruction presents a whole and teaches how this can be broken down into parts.

Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction is direct instruction that is structured, sequential and cumulative. Explicit instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical, sequential plan. There is no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge. Explicit instruction maximizes student engagement. The teacher demonstrates the task and provides guided practice with immediate corrective feedback before the student attempts the task independently.

Considerations for English Learners

Emergent bilingual students with dyslexia may demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN). Spanish intervention and cross-linguistic correlations are instructional components that are considered and implemented in LISD when appropriate.

Common Supports for Dyslexic Students

Accommodations, for both testing and instruction, provide students with effective and equitable access to grade-level instruction. Accommodations allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities; they do not change academic standards or expectations. Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodations. Listed below are some examples of reasonable accommodations:

- Copy of teacher notes
- Additional time on assignments and tests
- Shortened assignments
- Oral reading of directions or written materials
- Audiobooks
- Speech to text
- Text to speech
- Spelling assistance

Frequently Asked Questions a Child May Have About Dyslexia

What is dyslexia? Dyslexia is a learning problem some people have. It makes it harder to read and spell. It doesn't mean the person isn't intelligent. It means the person needs to be taught to read and spell in a different way.

How did I get dyslexia? Dyslexia is something people are born with and you may not be the only family member with dyslexia.

Is there something wrong with my brain? No, nothing is wrong with your brain. Your brain is happier learning to read in a different way.

Does having dyslexia mean I am dumb? No, dyslexia is a problem smart people have with reading and spelling. 1 in 5 people have it.

Why do I have to leave my homeroom for dyslexia class? People with dyslexia participate in a reading class to train the brain how to read and spell in a different way. Only other people with dyslexia get to learn with this special method that has been researched by scientists who study the brain.

Suggested Reading for Students

Adam Zigzag by Barbara Berrie (1995)

Close to Famous by Joan Bauer (2012)

Eleven by Patricia Reilly Giff (2009)

How Dyslexic Benny Became a Star: A Story of Hope for Dyslexic Children and Their Parents
by Joe Griffith (1997)

I Have Dyslexia. What does that mean? by Shelley Ball-Dannenberg (2009)

It's Called Dyslexia (Live and Learn Series) by Jennifer Moore-Mallinos (2007)

Knees: The mixed up world of a boy with dyslexia by Vanita Oelschlager (2012)

My Name is Brain Brian by Jeanne Betancourt (1995)

Thank You, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco (2012)

The Alphabet War: A Story about Dyslexia by Diane Burton Robb and Gail Piazza (2004)

The Hank Zipzer series by Henry Winkler (2004-2009)

The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1)
by Rick Riordan (2006)

Frequently Asked Questions About Dyslexia

What causes dyslexia? The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions.

What should reading instruction look like for a dyslexic learner? Reading instruction should be delivered using a multisensory, systematic, phonics based approach that teaches for mastery. Instructional components should include phonological awareness, alphabet skills, phonics, spelling, and fluency.

Will my child always have dyslexia? Dyslexia is a lifelong condition. With proper help, people with dyslexia can learn to read and write successfully.

What percentage of the population has dyslexia? It is estimated that 10-15% of the population has dyslexia.

What does dyslexia say about my child's level of intelligence? Dyslexia is not due to a lack of intelligence. Most dyslexics have average to above average intelligence.

Is dyslexia hereditary? It is genetic so it often runs in families.

Does dyslexia have anything to do with vision? Dyslexia affects the way the brain processes language. It is not a problem with vision.

Is dyslexia more common in boys? No. Current research indicates that equal proportions of males and females have dyslexia.

Do colored overlays cure dyslexia? No. There is no strong research evidence that intervention using colored overlays or special lenses has any effect on the word reading or comprehension of children with dyslexia.

Are reversals an indicator of dyslexia? Reversals alone are not an indicator of dyslexia. Reversals are common in the early stages of reading and writing development in average and dyslexic children alike. Reversals are normal until the age of 8. Some children with dyslexia have problems with reversals while others do not.

How often is my child evaluated? 504 or ARD meetings will be held annually to review progress.

How long will my child receive direct dyslexia instruction? Since every child develops and learns at their own pace, this is a difficult question to answer. Most children stay in the program for several years, but every child is different. Progress will be reviewed annually at 504 or ARD meetings to determine when your child is ready for dismissal from the dyslexia program.

How will my child be supported once they've exited the dyslexia program? Once your child is dismissed from the program they are still eligible to receive 504 accommodations as long as they need them.

How will I be updated on my child's progress in the dyslexia program?

The Dyslexia Interventionist will provide a progress report every 9 weeks. Additionally, the 504 plan or IEP is reviewed and updated annually.

How can I be involved in supporting my child's dyslexia intervention? See the list of parent suggestions in this handbook. Stay in close contact with your child's dyslexia interventionist to ask for suggestions on how you can support your child. One of the most important things you can do is to continue to read to your child.



Dysgraphia

What is Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a word of Greek origin

dys:difficulty

graph:to write/writing

ia: a condition or state of



Dysgraphia is best defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015). Secondary consequences may include problems with spelling and written expression.



Dysgraphia is related to dyslexia as both are language-based disorders. In dyslexia, the impairment is with word-level skills (decoding, word identification, spelling). Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills—finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a subword-level language skill. The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing, but individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading (Berninger, Richards, & Abbott, 2015).



"Dysgraphia" TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>

Dysgraphia Characteristics

The characteristics of dysgraphia include the following:

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews & Lombardino, 2014).

Dysgraphia is NOT:

- Evidence of a damaged motor nervous system
- Part of a developmental disability that has fine motor deficits (e.g. Intellectual disability, autism, cerebral palsy)
- Secondary to a medical condition (e.g., meningitis, significant head trauma, brain trauma)
- Association with generalized developmental motor or coordination difficulties (Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Impaired spelling or written expression with typical handwriting (legibility and rate) (Berninger 2004)

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dysgraphia

The following behaviors may be risk factors associated with dysgraphia:

- Slow or labored written work
- Poor formation of letters
- Improper letter slant
- Poor pencil grip
- Inadequate pressure during handwriting (too hard or too soft)
- Excessive erasures
- Poor spacing between words
- Poor spacing inside words
- Inability to recall accurate orthographic patterns for words
- “B” and “d” reversals beyond developmentally appropriate time
- Inability to copy words accurately
- Inability of students to read what was previously written
- Overuse of short familiar words such as “big”
- Avoidance of written tasks
- Difficulty with visual-motor integrated sports or activities

It is important to keep in mind that:

- *dyslexia and dysgraphia are now recognized to be distinct disorders that can exist concurrently or separately. They have different brain mechanisms and identifiable characteristics.*
- *individuals with only dysgraphia do not have difficulty with reading (Berninger, Richards, & Abbott, 2015).*

Components of Dysgraphia Instruction

Dysgraphia instruction and intervention implemented in LISD follows a research based instructional model for students identified with dysgraphia. LISD implements TEA guidelines for specialized instruction including: handwriting, spelling, and writing. The IEP/ARD committee for each student identified with Dysgraphia and a need for specially designed instruction, identifies the student's needs in each area impacted to develop goals around which to provide direct instruction.

While it is necessary that students are provided instruction in the above content, it is also critical that the way in which the content is delivered be consistent with research-based practices. Principles of effective intervention for students with dysgraphia include all of the following:

Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT)

Multisensory instruction incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) during teacher presentation and student practice.

Systematic and Cumulative

This type of instruction requires that the organization of material follow the order of the language. The sequence begins with the easiest concepts and most basic elements and progresses to more difficult material. Each step must also be based on something already learned. Concepts must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory.

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Common Supports for Students with Dysgraphia

Accommodations, for both testing and instruction, provide students with effective and equitable access to grade-level instruction. Accommodations allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities; they do not change academic standards or expectations. Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dysgraphia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodations. Listed below are some examples of reasonable accommodations:

- Copy of teacher notes
- Allow more time for written tasks including note taking, copying and tests
- Reduce the length requirements of written assignments
- Allow the student to audio record important assignments and /or take oral tests
- Allow the use of technology
- Speech to text
- Allow the student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient
- Offer an alternative to a written project such as an oral report, dramatic presentation, or visual media process

Parent Resources

Lewisville ISD Dyslexia Website
<https://www.lisd.net/Domain/124>

International Dyslexia Association Website
<https://dyslexiaida.org>

Dallas Branch of the International Dyslexia Association Website
<http://dal.dyslexiaida.org>

Region 11 Contact:
April Whisenant
awhisenant@esc11.net

Learning Ally
<http://www.learningally.org>
is a nonprofit organization providing dyslexia support through audiobooks & parent support services.

Talking Book Program
<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/aboutus>
provides free library services for Texans of any age who are blind or have a visual, physical, or reading disability.

The TEA Dyslexia Handbook:
English:
<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/texas-dyslexia-handbook-2021.pdf>

Spanish:
Coming soon!

Suggestions for Parents

1. Read to your child. Share reading experiences by reading aloud stories at your child's interest level.
2. Find your child's talent. Provide opportunities for your child to explore and develop their area of talent. (ex. Art, Sports, Science, Math, Scouts, Drama, etc.)
3. Allow frequent breaks during homework.
4. Break homework and/or projects into smaller, more manageable pieces.
5. Use a tactile approach to practicing spelling words (sand, sidewalk chalk, shaving cream).
6. Help your child with organizational strategies.
7. Keep in close communication with your child's teacher.
8. Provide access to assistive technology (text to speech, speech to text on devices) and audio books.

Suggested Reading for Parents

About Dyslexia: Unraveling the Myth by Priscilla L. Vail (1990)

Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz M.D. (2003)

Parenting a Struggling Reader: A Guide to Diagnosing and Finding Help for Your Child's Reading Difficulties by Susan Hall and Louisa Moats (2002)

Reading David: A Mother and Son's Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dyslexia by Lissa Weinstein (2004)

Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know and Ways to Help by Priscilla L. Vail (1989)



Website:
<https://www.lisd.net/domain/124>



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