



Dyslexia identification process

GOAL: to inform staff about the district procedures for identifying students with dyslexia.



K-W-L

- ▶ What do you want to know about Dyslexia? What questions do you hope to find out?
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM&noredirect=1>

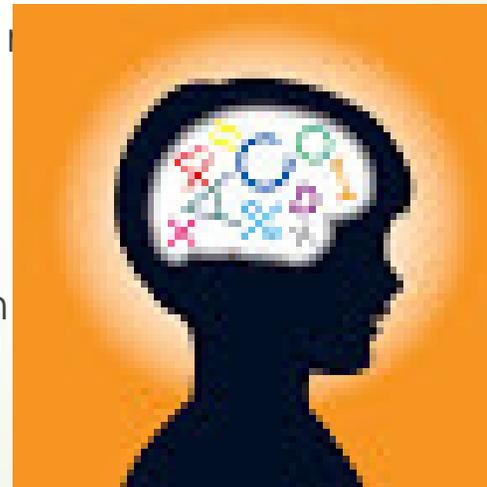
Section 1: Defining dyslexia

Specific Learning Disability that is:

- Neurological in origin (not environmental, situational difficulty with reading)
- Phonological deficit
- Difficulty with accurate word
- Difficulty with fluency
- Poor spelling

Secondary consequences:

- Difficulty with comprehension
- Low vocabulary





Section 1: Defining Dyslexia

- ▶ “It is important to acknowledge that students may struggle in learning to read for many reasons, including lack of motivation and interest, weak preparation from the pre-school home environment, weak English language skills, or low general intellectual ability (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In fact, the family and socio-cultural conditions associated with poverty actually contribute to a broader and more pervasive array of reading difficulties in school-aged children than do the neurological conditions associated with dyslexia. **Students with dyslexia represent a subgroup of all the students in school who experience difficulties learning to read.**”



Section 2: early indicators and characteristics

- ▶ Difficulty with manipulating words orally (say cat, now say it without the c.)
- ▶ Difficulty blending phonemes /c/ /a/ /t/
- ▶ Difficulty with learning letters/letter sounds
 - ▶ Nonsense words can be an indicator of a problem with this.
- ▶ Word level reading (in isolation, but often okay in context)
- ▶ Slow reading fluency (can be with lots of errors, or can be fairly accurate, but slow due to slow processing of words.)
- ▶ Spelling, writing, and comprehension are also secondary consequences due to the lack of decoding skills and sounds.

Section 2: Early Indicators and Characteristics

- Children likely to have difficulties learning to read can be identified as early as preschool or kindergarten, but it is **frequently not possible to differentiate in preschool or kindergarten between students who have dyslexia, and students who are at risk for reading problems for other reasons**. Unfortunately, many children of poverty, or those with limited exposure to Standard English in their homes, also manifest these same types of difficulties in kindergarten. An accurate diagnosis of dyslexia in preschool or kindergarten is more likely when these problems occur in students who: 1) have strong abilities in other areas of language such as vocabulary; 2) come from homes that provide a language and print rich preschool environment; and, 3) have a first or second-degree relative who experienced severe early reading difficulties.

7 How Do You Know If It Is Dyslexia Or a Struggle With Reading Due To Other Factors?

A poor reader may appear to “fit the profile” of dyslexia. However, if the learner responds quickly to appropriate intervention, the source of the reading problem is more likely related to earlier educational opportunity than to problems in the child’s physical makeup that limit the ability to learn from the instruction provided.

Some students simply need more structured and systematic instruction to get back on track. They do not have learning disabilities.



SECTION 3: Response to Intervention Placement

- ▶ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) allows for the use of a student's response to intervention for identifying specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia. Importantly, the IDEA law requires a student be provided high-quality, research-based general education instruction to **ensure a student's difficulties are not the result of inadequate instruction.**
- ▶ The universal screening results should potentially identify those students at risk for poor learning outcomes. Students who do not meet the cut-points for risk indicate a skill level where intervention is needed.
- ▶ Additional diagnostic tools should be considered. *Diagnostic tools* refer to specific tests or instruments selected to measure specific areas of concern. The results from these targeted assessments or diagnostic tools are critical in planning interventions focused on the student's needs. **The use of diagnostic tools does not lead to a**



Section 4: Initial screening

ALL Kindergarten and First Grade students

- ▶ Letter Naming Fluency
- ▶ Letter Sound Fluency
- ▶ Phoneme Segmentation
- ▶ Nonsense Word Fluency
- ▶ Sight Words
- ▶ Text Level
- ▶ Encoding (WTW Spelling Assessment)

2nd – 6th Grade Students

- ▶ Teacher recommendation
- ▶ Below the 40th percentile on MAP
 - ▶ Text Level
 - ▶ Fluency (wpm)
 - ▶ Encoding (WTW Spelling Assessment)



Tier 2 Intervention

- ▶ Progress monitoring data is used to determine when a student is or is not responding to intervention. Until a student maintains scores **above cut-point for two consecutive cycles**, progress monitoring is recommended at least monthly. When a student is not making sufficient progress, the school-based decision making team should consider increasing the intensity of an intervention. For many students, a supplemental, Tier II intervention provides the necessary support to improve reading achievement to grade-level expectations and maintains reading growth without further intervention.
- ▶ If a student continues to make insufficient progress or fails to respond to intervention, the grade level

Section 5: Level 1 Dyslexia Screening

- One the initial screener indicates a student is at risk AND the student does not adequately respond to intervention, The RTI Team should consider the following factors:
 - **The child has received effective classroom instruction (tier 1);**
 - **The student has adequate intelligence or the ability to learn;**
 - **The lack of progress is not due to sociocultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or background experiences**
- Once those factors are ruled out as a cause of the reading difficulties, parents are informed of the concerns and additional dyslexia screening tools will be administered.
- The Level I Dyslexia Screening is a process of gathering additional information that should include progress monitoring data, work samples, and other formative literacy assessments. These tools may include the following: Aimsweb spelling, Aimsweb written expression, CORE subtests in phonological processing, word reading and nonsense word reading.



Problem Solving Team Meeting

- ▶ The building Problem Solving team will meet to review the Level 1 Dyslexia Screening results. Parents will be invited to attend. The team will then determine next steps for treatment.
- ▶
 - ▶ **Acceptable progress:** continue intervention
 - ▶ **Limited Progress:** adjust intervention
 - ▶ **Minimal Progress:** move to Level 2 Dyslexia Evaluation.

SECTION 6: Level 2 Dyslexia Screening

The Level II Dyslexia Screening is a more detailed process for identifying a pattern of strengths and weaknesses documenting the characteristics of dyslexia. The specific skills to be tested include phonological awareness, rapid naming, word reading, decoding, fluency, spelling and reading comprehension.

The Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children created the *Characteristic Profile of Dyslexia* to aid in school-based identification of dyslexia. This profile provides five questions to consider when identifying student with characteristics of dyslexia. The questions are:

- ▶ 1. Does the student demonstrate **one or more of the primary reading characteristics** of dyslexia **in addition to** a **spelling deficit**?
- ▶ 2. Are the reading and spelling difficulties the result of a **phonological processing deficit**?
- ▶ 3. Are the reading, spelling, and phonological processing deficits **unexpected**? Does the student demonstrate cognitive ability to support age level academic learning?
- ▶ 4. Are there secondary characteristics of dyslexia evident in reading comprehension and written expression?
- ▶ 5. Does the student have strengths that could be assets? Are there coexisting deficits that may complicate identification and the response to intervention and may deserve further assessment and intervention?

Appendix a: dyslexia screening characteristics Checklist

1. If the Level II Dyslexia Screening conducted by the school district indicates a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia, the student shall be **provided intervention services using a dyslexia program delivered** with fidelity. A **dyslexia diagnosis is not required for a school to provide dyslexia intervention services.**

Children with Dyslexia may have difficulty in one or more of the following areas:

➤ Phonological Processing

- Rhyming, syllables, and onsets/rimes
- Hearing individual sounds and segmenting them
- Ability to hold information given or read orally in short term memory

➤ Orthographic processing

- Letter formation
- Memory and recall of letters, letters in words, or words

(NOTE: Some children with only orthographic challenges (not dyslexia) read much better than they spell, and benefit from explicit instruction in how to form, retain, and recall mental images of print.)

➤ Rapid Automatic Naming

- Ability to quickly name pictures of well known objects and symbols.

Problem-Solving Team Outcomes

2. If it is determined that the student has functional difficulties in the academic environment due to characteristics of dyslexia, the necessary accommodations or equipment for the student shall be provided under **Section 504** of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- In other words, having a learning problem does not automatically qualify a student for accommodations/equipment under Section 504. The impairment must substantially limit one or more major life activities in order to be considered a disability under Section 504.

3. It should be noted that the referral committee would make the decision as to whether or not an **evaluation for special education** was warranted and what assessments were needed based on the child's suspected disability. If the referral committee decided against an evaluation for special education, the district would still be required by Acts 1294 and 1268 to screen for dyslexia if it had not already been conducted.



Section 7: independent Comprehensive dyslexia Evaluation

- ▶ *A dyslexia diagnosis is not required* for a school to provide dyslexia intervention services; however a parent or legal guardian may choose to have an independent comprehensive dyslexia evaluation for the student.
- ▶ This evaluation must be conducted by Licensed Psychological Examiner, School Psychology Specialist, Licensed Speech Language Pathologist, Certified Dyslexia Testing Specialist, or Dyslexia Therapist. This professional should have a knowledge and background in psychology, reading, language education, dyslexia and other related disorders. A thorough working knowledge of how individuals learn to read and why some individuals struggle, and how to plan appropriate interventions is a must.
- ▶ See Appendix D: Parent Questions to Ask a Diagnostician



SECTION 8: Instructional Approaches for Students with Dyslexia

- ▶ Dyslexia Intervention should provide explicit, direct, systematic and cumulative instruction that is individualized to support learning and focused on meaning. Additional intervention considerations include multisensory instruction to meet student needs.
 - Provides systematic, research-based instruction
 - Includes instruction that is multisensory addressing two or more sensory pathways during instruction or practice.
 - Provides instruction in the essential components of reading in a small-group or individual setting that maintains fidelity of the program that includes phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, structure of the English language, linguistic instruction, and strategies for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

No one remedial reading method works for all dyslexia students.



Section 9: professional awareness

- ▶ Indicators of Dyslexia
- ▶ Evidence based intervention strategies and accommodations for dyslexia (Appendix B)



Section 10: special education and dyslexia

- ▶ It is important to understand that **students can be diagnosed with a specific learning disability** as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V), **but not automatically qualify as having a disability** as defined in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), which govern the provision of special education services to students with disabilities. These regulations specify that each school district is responsible for ensuring that all children with disabilities, within its jurisdiction, who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. The regulations make clear that **having a disability in and of itself does not make a child eligible for special education services**. The child must also have a need for special education and related services arising from that disability. The impact of the disability on the child must be significant enough that it adversely affects the student's access to general education curriculum, and the child's ability to make meaningful educational progress.
- ▶ A student suspected of having dyslexia or related disorders who is **unable to make adequate academic progress** may be referred to special education for evaluation and possible identification as a child with a disability within the meaning of IDEA 2004. It should be noted that the Special Education Assessment team would make the decision as to whether or not an evaluation for special education was warranted, based on student data.

What can you do?

1. Know the indicators for your grade/level to look for.
2. Bring any student to the RTI Team first to gather more information.
3. Utilize any multi-sensory strategies whenever appropriate.

KINDERGARTEN:

- PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS activities
- Path of movement and automatic letter formation (FUNdamentals unit)
- Letter sorting to compare/contrast letter-shapes

FIRST/SECOND GRADE:

- Incorporating the letter tiles with the word sorts
- Color coding the vowels in word learning
- Multi-sensory sight word practice

THIRD GRADE – SIXTH GRADE:

- Watch for students who are accurate but slow decoders.
- Concerns with READING and SPELLING.
- Spelling lists associated with the syllable types/patterns.
- Multi-sensory spelling practice options.
- See Accommodations suggestions from IDA.

Feedback

- ▶ What other questions do you still have that didn't get answered?
- ▶ Although we can't solve it today, what still needs to be addressed regarding Dyslexia?
- ▶ What information, training, or support

