



Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia in the Individualized Education Program

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Dyslexia

Dyslexia Defined

Dyslexia is a term used to describe a specific learning disability in basic reading skills and/or reading fluency. The Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way as described in [The Dyslexia Handbook \(2018\)](#):

“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.

Characteristics of dyslexia include difficulties with:

- Identifying and recalling the names of alphabet letters, numbers, and familiar objects
- Mapping sounds to letters
- Auditory memory for rhymes, songs, and chants
- Blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds in words
- Reading words in isolation or reading unknown words
- Reading fluency
- Spelling
- Vocabulary acquisition due to reduced independent reading
- Reading comprehension
- Written production

Between 10-20% of students may demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia, including difficulties with single word reading, reading fluency, and spelling. Not all children with reading difficulties, including dyslexia, will qualify for special education. Even so, students who struggle with basic reading skills are likely to benefit from explicit academic instruction in phonological awareness, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, word reading, reading fluency, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Risk factors associated with dyslexia:

- Family history of dyslexia or reading difficulty
- Early language difficulties such as delayed talking or trouble pronouncing words
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words
- Challenges remembering letter names or connecting sounds to letters
- Difficulty reading and/or spelling words accurately
- Avoidance of reading and writing tasks
- Inaccurate or slow oral reading fluency
- Difficulty with note taking and written production

The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as:

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.



Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors (November 12, 2002)

Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia

Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a term used to describe a learning disability in writing. Students identified with dysgraphia may be eligible to receive special education services for a specific learning disability in written expression. [The Dyslexia Handbook \(2018\)](#) describes dysgraphia as a related disorder to dyslexia and provides the following definition:

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. It is not solely due to lack of instruction and is not associated with other developmental or neurological conditions that involve motor impairment. (p. 59)

Characteristics of dysgraphia:

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond the early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Inadequate, heavy, or variable pressure during handwriting
- Hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews & Lombardino, 2014)
- Difficulty copying words and/or sentences
- Avoidance of written tasks

Despite the widespread beliefs that handwriting is purely a motor skill or that only multisensory methods are needed to teach handwriting, multiple language processes are also involved in handwriting. Handwriting draws on language by hand (letter production), language by ear (listening to letter names when writing dictated letters), language by mouth (saying letter names), and language by eye (viewing the letters to be copied or reviewing for accuracy the letters that are produced from memory) (Berninger & Wolf, 2016). [Dyslexia Handbook \(2018\)](#)

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is a term used to describe a learning disability in math. Students identified with dyscalculia may be eligible to receive special education services for a specific learning disability in math calculation and/or math problem-solving skills. Dyscalculia is not one of the dyslexia-related conditions identified in TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995). However, dyscalculia can co-occur with dyslexia or other learning disabilities.

Math difficulties include challenges with:

- Counting money
- Place value
- Telling time/elapsed time
- Basic computation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Multistep problem solving
- Skip counting
- Rounding
- Estimation
- Timed tests
- Mental math
- Fractions, decimals, and ratios
- Geometry

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), the term specific learning disability (SLD) refers to “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.” (20 U.S.C. § 1401 (30))

Overview of Specific Learning Disabilities

IDEA recognizes eight areas in which a student may qualify with a specific learning disability (SLD). The eight areas include basic reading skills, reading fluency, oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, and mathematics problem-solving. These are not specific conditions; rather they describe areas where the student does not achieve adequately for his or her age or meet state-approved grade level standards.

Learning difficulties may signal the need for screening, monitoring, intervention, and/or evaluation. Campus instructional teams can and should refer students for evaluation when disability and the need for special education services are suspected.

Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia in the IEP

Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals for students identified with specific learning disabilities must be based on individual needs as determined by the Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) committee. Moreover, neither federal nor state law precludes an ARD committee from including goals in a student's IEP related to the mastery of skills taught through instruction. The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), provided clarification in a "[Dear Colleague](#)" letter dated October 23, 2015, which states, "There is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation eligibility determinations, or IEP documents."

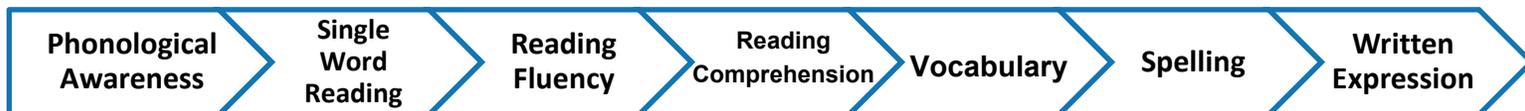
How can the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia be used in the IEP?

- ✓ A student with dyslexia would likely be described in the IEP as having a specific learning disability in basic reading skills and/or reading fluency with the condition of dyslexia. Another way to describe a student with dyslexia in the IEP or evaluation documents could read: *Josie has dyslexia, a specific learning disability in basic reading skills, with primary impairments in single word decoding, orthographic awareness, and rapid naming.*
- ✓ A student with dysgraphia would likely be described in the IEP as having a specific learning disability in written expression with the condition of dysgraphia; Another way to describe a student with dysgraphia could read: *Brant has dysgraphia and demonstrates significant impairments in handwriting and written production.*
- ✓ A student with dyscalculia would likely be described in the IEP as having a specific learning disability in math calculation or math problem-solving. A statement to describe a student with dyscalculia could read: *Diego has dyscalculia, a specific learning disability in math calculation; he struggles to solve basic math facts with adequate speed and accuracy.*

ARD committees should consider specific needs of students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or dyscalculia when developing the IEP.

Dyslexia:

Students with dyslexia may have deficits in phonological awareness, letter-sound awareness, word reading, reading fluency, and/or spelling. Difficulties with reading comprehension, written expression, and vocabulary may present as secondary consequences of dyslexia.



Dysgraphia:

Students with dysgraphia may have specific challenges with handwriting, spelling, written expression, note-taking, and keeping up with assignments and overall work completion



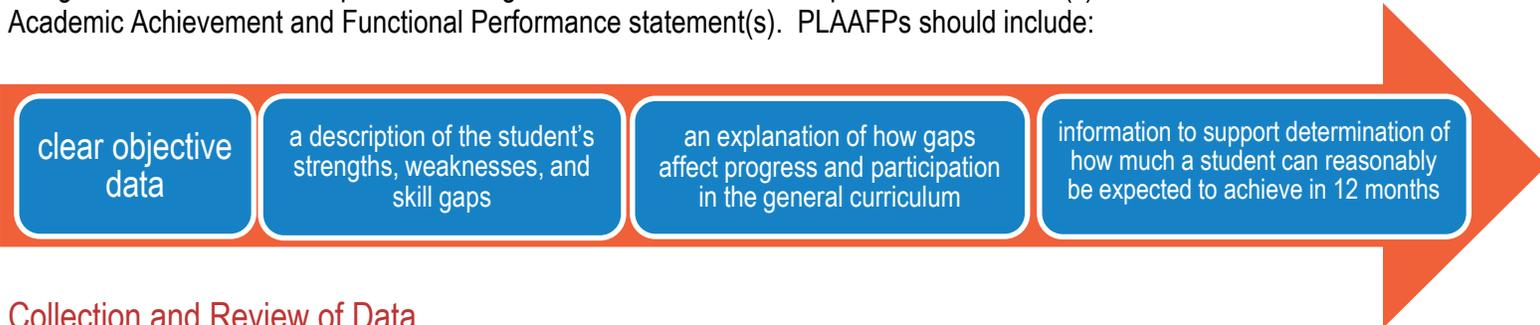
Dyscalculia:

Students with dyscalculia may have difficulties solving basic math problems with typical accuracy and speed.



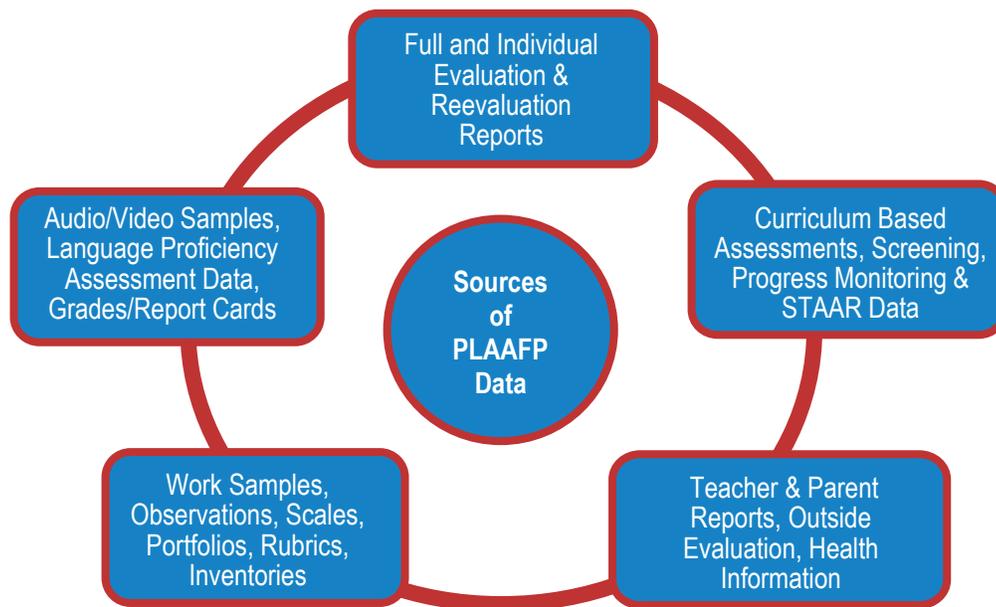
Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance Statements (PLAAFPs)

IEP goals for students with specific learning disabilities should reflect specific student need(s) based on the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance statement(s). PLAAFPs should include:



Collection and Review of Data

ARD committees should review multiple sources of data when developing PLAAFP statements.



Development of the PLAAFP

PLAAFPs should accurately describe a student's current performance in:

- **Academic Achievement:**
 - Language arts, math, social studies, science
- **Functional Performance:**
 - Daily living or self-help skills—dressing, eating, using the restroom
 - Social skills—turn-taking, participation, play
 - Behavior— attention, focus, inhibition, self-control, executive function
 - Sensory skills—hearing, seeing
 - Communication skills—talking, listening, participating in conversation
 - Mobility—getting around in school and the community



Academic | Functional

Student needs, as described in the PLAAFP statement,



support the development of meaningful IEP goals.

PLAAFP Examples for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities:

Below, review examples of PLAAFP statements developed and revised by ARD committees. Consider which statements lack specificity and which statements provide a robust and clear description of the student's achievement.

Vague: Classroom teachers report Juan reads below grade level, and he has failed every benchmark since first grade.

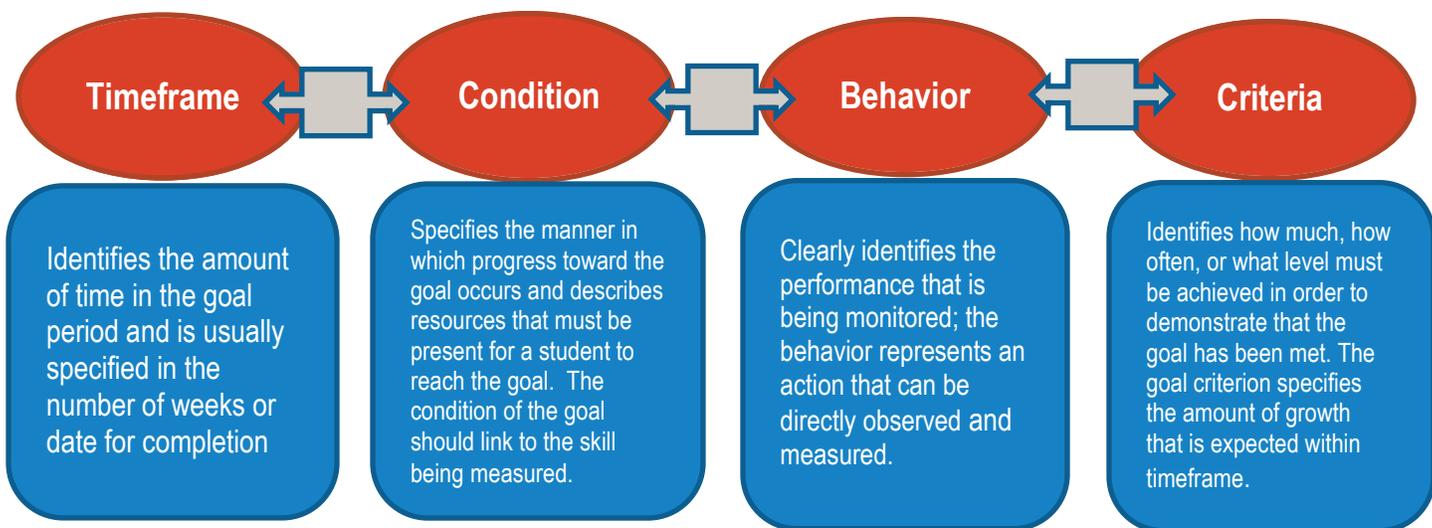
Clear: According to recent curriculum-based assessments, Juan reads second-grade leveled material at 50-54 words correct per minute (WCPM), and answers oral comprehension questions with 85% accuracy. When presented with an on-grade level, fifth-grade leveled passage, he reads at 39-43 WCPM and answers 40-50% of the comprehension questions presented orally. Minimum grade level expectations are between 87-121 WCPM. He struggles to read with adequate fluency and answer oral comprehension questions accurately at grade level. Juan needs to improve multisyllabic word decoding, specifically words with vowel teams and diphthongs (e.g., breakfast, autumn, coil), and reading fluency to support reading comprehension to progress in the general curriculum.

Vague: Tyrell's writing is below grade level, and he needs help spelling grade-level words.

Clear: Tyrell, a fourth-grade student, can compose four to five sentences independently on a single topic when given a prompt. Even so, his sentences lack accurate subject-verb agreement, and he uses capitalization and punctuation with 50% accuracy. He spells third grade-leveled, one- and two-syllable encodable words with 60% accuracy as measured by a normed spelling inventory. Tyrell's writing skills affect his ability to complete grade level work and communicate effectively in written form. Tyrell needs to improve grammar and spelling skills to improve his ability to communicate through writing to progress in the general curriculum.

IEP Goals

ARD committees develop IEP goals based on PLAAFP statements. A student identified with a specific learning disability who demonstrates academic difficulties will benefit from clearly written, objectively measured goals that are reasonably calculated to enable her to make progress that is appropriate in light of her circumstances. Goals should be clearly articulated in the IEP. ARD committees should specify the timeframe, condition, behavior, and criteria within IEP goals. Please note, the student's enrolled grade level should be documented somewhere within the ARD document, but does not have to be included or repeated within the annual goal(s).



Goal Examples for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities:

On the following page, review examples of goals developed by ARD committees. Consider how the timeframe, conditions, behavior, and criteria are described in each goal to specify learning expectations.

	Timeframe	Conditions	Behavior	Criteria
Goal 1: Phonological Awareness	By May 20, 2019	when orally provided multisyllabic words with up to three syllables,	Desiree, a Kindergarten student*, will blend and segment syllables	with 90% accuracy across four consecutive trials.
ELAR TEKS-K-(2)(A)The student is expected to demonstrate phonological awareness by: (v) blending syllables to form multisyllabic words; (vi) segmenting multisyllabic words into syllables.				
Goal 2: Decoding	In 36 instructional weeks	when given a list of 50 decodable single and multisyllabic words at a third-grade level that contain various syllable types, including closed (ship), open (tiger), vowel teams (float), vowel-consonant-e (grape), and diphthongs (thousand),	Juan, a fifth-grade student*, will accurately decode	48/50 words across three consecutive trials for mastery.
ELAR TEKS-5-(2)(A)The student is expected to demonstrate and apply phonetic knowledge by: (ii) decoding multisyllabic words with closed syllables, open syllables, VCe syllables; vowel teams, including digraphs and diphthongs; r-controlled syllables, and final stable syllables.				
Goal 3: Written Expression	By the end of May 2019	when asked to produce a written response that demonstrates understanding of fifth-grade leveled text she has read with teacher or audio support,	Tisha, a fifth-grade student*, will compose three or more sentences by hand or by computer using speech to text software that demonstrates understanding of text	in four of five trials within a nine-week period.
ELAR TEKS-5-(7)(B)The student is expected to write responses that demonstrate understanding of texts, including comparing and contrasting ideas across a variety of sources.				
Goal 4: Spelling	By the end of the 2019-2020 school year	when asked to spell single-syllable words at a second grade level of various syllable types such as closed (craft), open (me), vowel-consonant-e (shape), r-controlled vowel syllable (sharp), and vowel pairs (rain),	Janay, a fourth-grade student*, will spell words of each syllable type	with 80% accuracy on three out of four trials for mastery.
ELAR TEKS-4-(2)(B)The student is expected to demonstrate and apply spelling knowledge by: (i) spelling multisyllabic words with closed syllables; open syllables; VCe syllables; vowel teams, including digraphs and diphthongs; r-controlled syllables; and final stable syllables.				
Goal 5: Decoding	By the end of the year grading period	when given a list of two- and three-syllable words at a third-grade level with prefixes and/or suffixes such as redone, previewed, rereading, disliked, or untied	Preston, a fifth-grade student*, will accurately decode	18 of 20 words.
ELAR TEKS-5-(2)(A) The student is expected to demonstrate and apply phonetic knowledge by: (iv) decoding words using advanced knowledge of the influence of prefixes and suffixes on base words .				

*Grade level is included within the behavior section in these examples as information for the reader but is not required to be stated within goals and/or objectives.

IEP Short-term Objectives/Benchmarks

Short-term objectives/benchmarks are the steps to be taken between the student’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and the attainment of the annual goal. In Texas, all students who take the alternate assessment (STAAR Alternative 2) must have at least two short-term objectives/benchmarks as part of their measurable annual goals. For a student who takes any other state assessment, the ARD committee may choose to include short-term objectives/benchmarks as part of the annual goals in order to assist in monitoring the student’s progress toward mastery of IEP goals. Like the annual goal, best practice will entail that short-term objectives/benchmarks include a timeframe, condition(s), behavior, and criterion. When included, it is expected that at least two short-term objectives/benchmarks for each goal be written. Below, review an example of a reading fluency goal and related benchmarks. Consider how the timeframe, conditions, behavior, and criteria are described in each objective to specify learning expectations.

	Timeframe	Conditions	Behavior	Criteria
Goal: Reading Fluency	By the end of the school year,	when asked to orally read an unfamiliar fourth-grade informational passage independently,	Lillian, a sixth-grade student*, will read	an average of 115 words correct per minute (WCPM).
ELAR TEKS-6-(3)(A) The student is expected to adjust fluency when reading grade-level text based on the reading purpose.* *No oral reading fluency measures are specifically provided in TEKS. Goal and benchmarks are based on Hasbrouk & Tindall 2017 Oral Reading Fluency Data (https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/2017%20ORF%20NORMS%20PDF.pdf)				
Benchmark 1	By the end of the second six-weeks grading period	when asked to orally read an unfamiliar fourth-grade passage independently,	Lillian will read	an average of 75 WCPM.
Benchmark 2	By the end of the fourth six-weeks grading period	when asked to orally read an unfamiliar fourth-grade passage independently,	Lillian will read	an average of 88 WCPM.
Benchmark 3	By the end of the sixth six-weeks grading period	when asked to orally read an unfamiliar fourth-grade passage independently,	Lillian will read	an average of 100 WCPM.

When clearly written, IEP goals support the ARD committee



in determining appropriate services and supports for students.

If a student does not master an IEP goal, the ARD committee should examine the goal and analyze the situation to determine what factor(s) play a part in the student not mastering the goal. The ARD committee will need to determine whether the goal is appropriate, whether it has been implemented correctly, and any other adjustments that need to be made to the goal in order to meet the student’s need.

*Grade level is included within the behavior section in this example as information for the reader but is not required to be stated within goals and/or objectives.

Progress Reporting

The IEP must include a description of when progress reports will be provided to parents. The student’s progress toward mastery of the annual goal(s) must be reported to the student’s parents as stated in the IEP. Additionally, progress should be reported in the same manner as the goal is measured. Notations such as “progress being made” or “continuing” are not adequate for reporting progress. Some examples of the frequency for reporting progress to parents include:

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- At the end of each grading period

If a student fails to maintain progress or fails to make progress toward an IEP goal for two consecutive reporting periods, best practice states that the ARD committee should consider the need to meet and evaluate current supports and services that are not currently resulting in progress. ARD committees should review the intensity of the intervention by considering the strength, dosage, comprehensiveness, and attention to transfer of skills (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Malone, 2017).

Scenarios

Below, review two scenarios regarding student data. In Scenario A, Mateo achieves his reading fluency goal. In Scenario B, Mateo makes limited progress. Best practice posits that the ARD committee should have convened after Progress Reporting Period Two to discuss lack of progress and possible supports and services Mateo requires to achieve his IEP goal.

IEP Measurable Annual Goal: By the end of the fourth nine weeks, when asked to orally read an unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passage independently, Mateo, a fifth-grade student, will read an average of 125 words correct per minute (WCPM) as demonstrated by curriculum based measurements.

Baseline Data: Mateo reads unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages at an average of 80 WCPM.

	Progress Reporting Period One	Progress Reporting Period Two	Progress Reporting Period Three	Progress Reporting Period Four
Scenario A	Mateo averaged 90 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 101 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 115 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 127 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.
Scenario B	Mateo averaged 80 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 82 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 86 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.	Mateo averaged 85 WCPM on unfamiliar fourth-grade leveled passages.



Student progress towards IEP goals is collected



to inform parents of student progress



and support the ARD committee in IEP development.

Instructional Considerations for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

Students with specific learning disabilities who receive special education require specially designed instruction and may need accommodations, modifications, and/or related services to support access to the general curriculum. The ARD committee determines the appropriate services and supports for students based on individual need as noted in the IEP.

Components of Dyslexia Instruction

Committees must consider the evidence-based instructional practices deemed necessary to support students with dyslexia. For more information on the critical, evidence based components of dyslexia instruction and requirements for teachers who provide dyslexia instruction, see Chapter IV in the Dyslexia Handbook (2018).

Components of instruction should include:

- ✓ Phonological awareness
- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Syllabication
- ✓ Orthography & spelling
- ✓ Morphology & vocabulary
- ✓ Syntax
- ✓ Reading fluency
- ✓ Reading comprehension



Instruction should be provided:

- ✓ Utilizing multisensory engagement
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Kinesthetic
 - Tactile
- ✓ Cumulatively
- ✓ Explicitly
- ✓ Systematically
- ✓ Based on research based practices

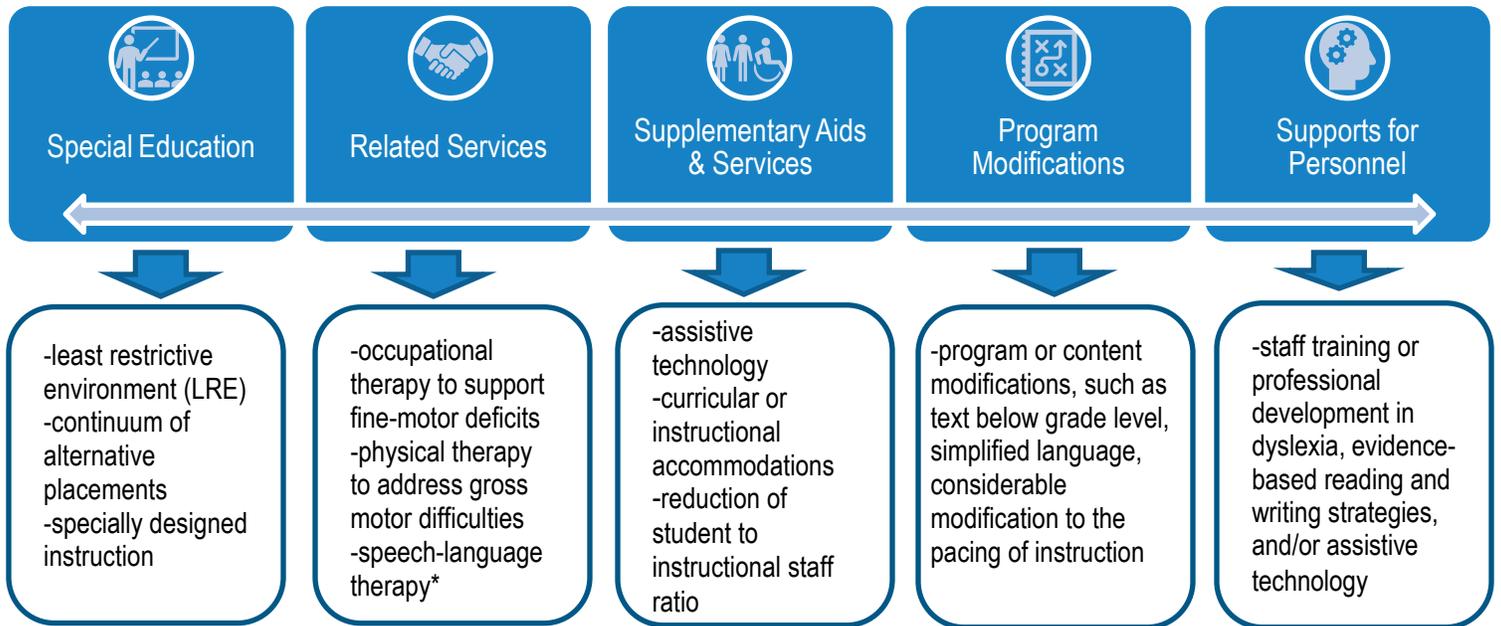
Accommodations

Accommodations for learning disabilities can support equitable access to the general education curriculum. Accommodations should be based on individual student needs. Listed below are examples of reasonable accommodations teams may consider:

- ✓ Note-taking assistance, including modified notes, Cornell notes, or copies of notes (teacher or peer)
- ✓ Additional time on class assignments and tests
- ✓ Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- ✓ Graphic organizers
- ✓ Sentence stems or sentence starters
- ✓ Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- ✓ Priority seating assignment
- ✓ Oral administration of text
- ✓ Teacher or student created word banks and/or frequently spelled word lists
- ✓ Spelling assistance, spell check, word prediction
- ✓ Grammar assistance
- ✓ Audiobooks
- ✓ Text to speech
- ✓ Speech to text
- ✓ Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs and internet applications
- ✓ Use of color coding or highlighting
- ✓ Math supports (calculators, formula charts, number lines, manipulatives, mnemonic devices)

Services and Supports

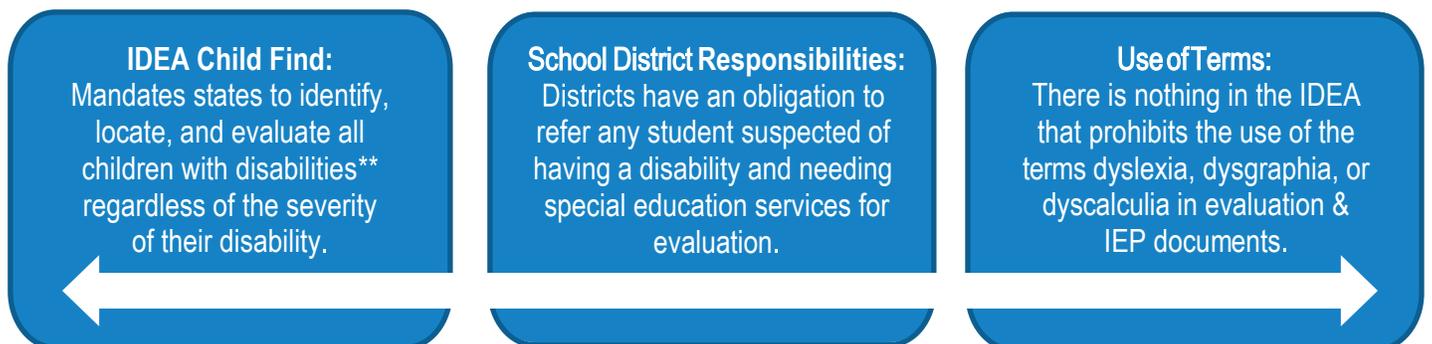
The IEP should state the supports and services for the student including reading intervention, specially designed instruction, accommodations, modifications, related services, and/or assistive technology that the student will receive as well as the anticipated location, frequency, and duration of those services and modifications. Below, review considerations for ARD committees when developing IEPs for students with specific learning disabilities.



Dyslexia intervention can be provided by one or more staff members (e.g., the reading interventionist, dyslexia therapist, special education teacher, speech language pathologist, and/or general education teacher) as determined by the ARD committee. Staff members providing dyslexia instruction must be trained in dyslexia and the specific program or curriculum being implemented. Students receiving special education and identified with dyslexia and related disorders may:

- benefit from standard dyslexia intervention and classroom accommodations,
- need additional intervention beyond that provided through a tiered reading framework or a dyslexia intervention program,
- require additional opportunities for pre-teach, practice, and reteach of specific skills,
- benefit from additional opportunities to respond and receive corrective feedback,
- receive standard dyslexia intervention from a dyslexia therapist in a general education setting, plus supplemental reading instruction from a special education teacher, and/or
- require modification of instructional pacing and presentation of skills.

Child Find & School District Responsibilities



*In Texas, speech-language therapy is an instructional service that can be a stand-alone service as well as a related service. **IDEA defines "children with disabilities" as children evaluated and determined to have one of the specified disabilities and who, as a result, needs special education and related services.

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Resources

- ✓ [The Dyslexia Handbook—2018 Update: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders](#)
- ✓ [Texas Education Agency Dyslexia and Related Disorders \(webpage\)](#)
- ✓ [Texas Education Agency Special Education \(webpage\)](#)
- ✓ [Dyslexia and Related Disorders in the IEP \(webinar\)](#)
- ✓ [Dyslexia and Related Disorders in the IEP \(powerpoint\)](#)

State Dyslexia Hotline (800) 232-3030
[State Dyslexia Services](#) (outside source)

Melanie Royal
State Dyslexia Consultant, Region 10
melanie.royal@region10.org

Cherry C. Lee
Dyslexia Coordinator
Division of Special Education
specialeducation@tea.texas.gov
(512) 463-9414

For more information on special education, please consult [SPEDTex](#), the Texas Special Education Information Center. This resource informs and supports parents, teachers, and anyone committed to the success of children with disabilities and can be reached by email or phone at 1-855-SPEDTEX (1-855-773-3839). For more information on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact the [Office of Civil Rights](#) at (214) 661-9600.