

Procedures for the Evaluation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia

Friendswood Independent School District follows the policies and procedures outlined in the Texas Education Code §38.003. The decision process established by the district for identification, evaluation, intervention, and placement concerning dyslexia is in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

Dyslexia Screening and Intervention

All students enrolled in Friendswood ISD will be screened for dyslexia and potential reading difficulties in kindergarten and first grade, as required by HB 1886. The purpose of the screening is to identify students who potentially may be at-risk for dyslexia. If a student presents with reading difficulties or risk factors for dyslexia, additional assessments may be administered and students may be provided with specialized reading intervention through the district's Response to Intervention (RtI) program.

Students experiencing difficulty in reading are given differentiated instruction and intervention within the classroom (Tier I). For some students, the interventions are successful and interventions are completed.

Other students continue to struggle with components of reading and require further, more in-depth interventions (Tier II). Students in Tier II receive supplemental, pull-out reading instruction with a teacher trained in reading interventions.

If students continue to struggle with reading and/or spelling, the Response to Intervention (RtI) Committee determines if Tier II interventions will continue or if Tier III interventions and/or an evaluation will be recommended.

What If I Suspect My Child Has Dyslexia?

First discuss your concerns with your child's classroom teacher. Share information about your child's development and observations of your child with homework. Ask if the teacher has any similar concerns.

If your child is receiving reading intervention through the Supplemental Reading Program, discuss your concerns with your child's interventionist as well.

You may submit a written request for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. All referrals are processed through the Principal or Assistant Principal. A child being referred for a dyslexia assessment will be evaluated under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). If your child is currently receiving services for either Section 504 or Special Education, please contact the appropriate department with your concerns.

Parents are encouraged to watch the "Could It Be Dyslexia" video by Susan Barton:
<http://www.brightsolutions.us/>.

Dyslexia Evaluation

Students enrolled in Friendswood ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003 (a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including, but not limited to, the student's reading performance and progress, reading difficulties, poor response to specialized, scientifically based reading instruction, and the input of teachers and parents or guardians. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's career (19TAC §74.28). While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career. In Texas, assessment for dyslexia is conducted from kindergarten through grade 12.

The procedures followed for assessment include:

- Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess student for dyslexia
- Inform parents or guardians of their rights
- Obtain parent or guardian written consent to evaluate
- Assess student, ensuring that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28)

Domains to Assess

Friendswood ISD administers measures that are appropriate for the student's age and reading development.

Academic Skills

- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- Reading real and nonsense words in isolation (decoding)
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy should be measured)
- Reading comprehension
- Written spelling

Cognitive processes that underlie the reading difficulties

- **Phonological/phonemic awareness** (Difficulties in phonological and phonemic awareness are typically seen in students with dyslexia and impact a student's ability to learn letters and the sounds associated with letters and letter combinations, learn the alphabetic principle, use the sounds of the letters and letter combinations to decode words and to accurately spell.)
- **Rapid Naming** (Difficulties in rapid naming may or may not be weak, but if deficient, will impact a student's ability to automatically name letters and read words and to read connected text at an appropriate rate.)
- **Orthographic processing** (Memory for letter patterns, letter sequences, and the letters in whole words may be selectively impaired or may coexist with phonological processing weaknesses.)

Based on the student's academic difficulties and characteristics, additional areas that may be assessed include the following:

- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Oral expression
- Written expression
- Handwriting
- Orthographic processing
- Mathematical reasoning
- Intelligence
- Family history of reading difficulties or dyslexia

Please refer to Chapter III - Procedures for the Evaluation and Identification of Students with Dyslexia of the Texas Dyslexia Handbook: 2021 Update.

Based on the above information and guidelines, **the §504 committee first determines whether the student has dyslexia. If the student has dyslexia, the committee also determines whether the student has a disability under §504. Whether a student is eligible for §504 accommodations is a separate determination from the determination that the student has dyslexia. A student is considered to have a disability under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning, including the specific activity of reading.** If the committee does not identify dyslexia, but the student has another condition or disability that substantially limits the student's learning, eligibility for §504 services related to the student's other condition or disability should be considered.

Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support or referral to special education. If a student is already qualified as a student with a disability under special education, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee should determine the least restrictive environment for delivering the student's dyslexia intervention.