Dyslexia and Related Disorders: Information for Parents

Characteristics of Dyslexia and Related Disorders:

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a brain-based learning disability that makes learning to read, write, or spell difficult.

Primary characteristics include difficulties with:

- Learning the sounds letters make
- Reading words in isolation or reading unknown words
- Reading smoothly with enough speed and accuracy to comprehend
- Spelling

What is Dysgraphia?

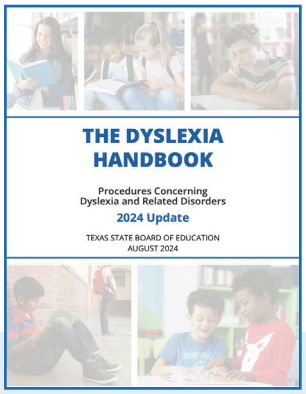
Dysgraphia is a related disorder of dyslexia and is a written language disability that involves both motor and language skills such as the finding, retrieving, and producing of letters.

Primary characteristics include difficulties with:

- Forming letters correctly
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond grade 2
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Copy words correctly
- Completing writing assignments

The Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) requires, through their rule at 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.28(f), that each school district and open-enrollment charter school provide certain information about dyslexia and related disorders to parents of students enrolled in the district or school.

19 TAC §74.28, along with the SBOE's Dyslexia Handbook referenced in subsection (c) of that rule and which is also available at tea.texas.gov/dyslexia, describes common characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders, the evaluation and identification process when dyslexia or a related disorder is suspected, and the instructional requirements for an identified student. If you have any problems accessing the electronic version of the Dyslexia Handbook, or if you wish to receive a hard copy, contact your child's school.



View the Dyslexia Handbook

To find out more information about the qualifications and contact information for the professionals who provide dyslexia instruction to identified students in your district or open-enrollment charter school:

Contact Information:

Claudette Ratliff, Dyslexia Coordinator
972-435-1010, ext. 4185

State Dyslexia Helpline: (800) 232-3030

SPEDTEX.ORG | TEA.TEXAS.GOV/DYSLEXIA

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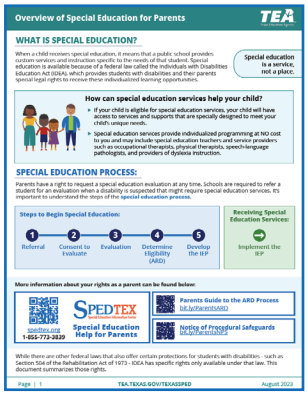
Texas Education Agency

Evaluation and identification of dyslexia and related disorders and the steps in the special education process:

Dyslexia and dysgraphia are considered specific learning disabilities (SLDs) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is the federal law that describes the requirements of special education. Special education is available because of IDEA, and the law provides students with disabilities and their parents special legal rights to receive individualized learning opportunities. It's important to understand the steps of the special education process. Please review the Overview of Special Education for Parents form developed by TEA for more information. When dyslexia or a related disorder is suspected that may require the provision of special education and related services, both IDEA and the Dyslexia Handbook outline the requirements for individual evaluations and the identification process.



Overview of Special Education for Parents

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

When a child receives special education, it means that a public school provides custom services and instruction specific to the needs of that student. Special education is available because of a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides students with disabilities and their parents special legal rights to receive these individualized learning opportunities.

Special education is a service, not a place.

How can special education services help your child?

- If your child is eligible for special education services, your child will have access to services and supports that are specially designed to meet your child's unique needs.
- Special education services provide individualized programming at NO cost to you and may include special education teachers and service providers such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and providers of dyslexia instruction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS:

Parents have a right to request a special education evaluation at any time. Schools are required to refer a student for an evaluation when a disability is suspected that might require special education services. It's important to understand the steps of the special education process.

Steps to Begin Special Education:

1 Referral → 2 Consent to Evaluate → 3 Evaluation → 4 Determine Eligibility (ARD) → 5 Develop the IEP

Receiving Special Education Services:

Implement the IEP

More information about your rights as a parent can be found below:

spedtex.org 1-855-773-2839

SPEDTEX Special Education Help for Parents

Parents Guide to the ARD Process bit.ly/ParentsARD

Notice of Procedural Safeguards bit.ly/ParentsNSP

While there are other federal laws that also offer certain protections for students with disabilities - such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - IDEA has specific rights only available under that law. This document summarizes those rights.

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This form and other valuable resources that explain IDEA eligible disabilities, parent rights, the special education process and more can be found on the SPEDTex website.

Effective instructional strategies for teaching students with dyslexia and related disorders:

Evidence-based dyslexia programs specifically studied to be used for students with dyslexia are considered specially designed instruction (SDI). SDI is the instruction required for the provision of special education and related services under the IDEA and is determined by an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. Evidence-based dyslexia programs are required to be delivered as the publisher intended unless a student's data indicates that changes are necessary. These programs must address certain components of instruction and delivery.

More information can be found on pages 39-41 of The Dyslexia Handbook.

Components of Instruction

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS Recognize and manipulate sounds in words	**SYLLABICATION** Breaking words into parts
SOUND-SYMBOL ASSOCIATION Sounds letters make	**ORTHOGRAPHY** Knowing how to spell words
MORPHOLOGY Prefixes, roots, suffixes	**READING COMPREHENSION** Understanding what you read
SYNTAX Knowledge of how words are arranged in meaningful sentences	**READING FLUENCY** Reading connected text with ease

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Components of Delivery	
Simultaneous, multisensory, visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile (VAKT)	Delivery of instruction includes all learning pathways to the brain
Systematic and cumulative	Instruction involves the introduction of skills from easiest to most difficult
Explicit instruction	Lessons are teacher led, and students are provided step-by-step instruction with immediate corrective feedback
Diagnostic teaching to automaticity	Skills can be performed quickly and efficiently
Synthetic instruction	Blending individual sounds to read a word
Analytic instruction	Reading a word and breaking it down into its individual sounds

Instructional Accommodations and Modifications:

Instructional accommodations and modifications are educational strategies that help students with disabilities learn independently by tailoring them to fit the students' specific needs. For students who qualify for special education and related services, accommodations and/or modifications are included in the student's individualized education program or (IEP). An IEP is the written document that is completed by the ARD committee for a student receiving special education services in Texas.

Accommodations:

Accommodation:
Changing
HOW
they are learning

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of student's disability on academic tasks but do not change learning expectations. The objectives of the course or activity remain the same. Accommodations change how the student learns or demonstrates knowledge.

Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia or a related disorder on each individual student determines the necessary accommodations.

For additional information on accommodations for dyslexia and dysgraphia see pages 51 and 66 in The Dyslexia Handbook.

Modifications:

Modification:
Changing
WHAT
they are learning

Modifications change what the student is expected to master. Modifications typically reduce the requirements for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) which are the state standards for what students should know and be able to do. With modifications, students access grade level curriculum through prerequisite skills. The decision to modify is a significant one; however, some students will require modifications. Decisions to modify should be data driven and individualized for the student.