




Understanding Dyslexia: A Parent's Guide to the Basics and How to Support Your Child


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Dyslexia






ADHD





Slidebooks

Check out the helpful information in these slidebooks which cover topics like ADHD and executive functioning

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THE DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK
2021 Update

Went into effect February 10, 2022.

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/19_0074_0028-1_2021.pdf

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"Dyslexia" - a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

- TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

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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

Individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed above.



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Reading represents a code, the alphabetic code. About 70-80% of children are able to break the code after a year of instruction. For the rest, reading remains beyond their reach after one, two or even more years of schooling.




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- When reading, your brain has to connect letters with sounds and put those sounds together in the right order.
- Then it has to help you put letters, words, and paragraphs together in ways that let you read them quickly and understand what they mean.
- It also has to connect words and sentences with other kinds of knowledge so – when you see "c-a-t" on a piece of paper, your brain doesn't just have to read the word "cat," it also has to make the connection that "cat" means a furry, four-legged animal that meows.





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- Before words can be identified, understood, stored in memory, or retrieved from it, they must first be broken down into phonemes by the neural machinery of the brain.

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PHONEME

- A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a language that makes a difference in its meaning.
- English has 44 phonemes
- Mexican Spanish – 30 (from my brief search)
- Words are made up of strings of phonemes
- big dig bug bin
- Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify, think about, or manipulate the individual sounds in words

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English is hard! There are 1100 graphic representations for the 44 sounds. The /k/ sound for example has 5 different graphic representations:

- C (cat, elect, frolic)
- K (kiss, skim, crook)
- -ck (back, luck)
- -ch (Chemistry, chord)
- -que (opaque, mosquito)

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- BUT in children with dyslexia, the phonemes are less well developed. Think of such a phoneme as a child's carved letter block whose face is so worn that the letter is no longer prominent. As a consequence, such children when speaking may have a hard time selecting the appropriate phoneme and may instead retrieve a phoneme that is similar in sound:
- Ocean (oops) – meant lotion
- Emeny (oops) – meant enemy

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Dyslexics have difficulty developing an awareness that spoken and written words are comprised of these phonemes or building blocks.


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DYSLEXIA IS ...


- NOT** A VISUAL PROBLEM
- NOT** A LACK OF INTELLIGENCE
- NOT** DUE TO LACK OF EFFORT
- NOT** A DEVELOPMENTAL LAG
- NOT** UNCOMMON
- NOT** RESPONSIVE TO STANDARD READING INSTRUCTION


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 **BUT.....**


- Deficits in PA alone do not account for all cases of dyslexia
- Rapid automatized naming (RAN) deficits are also evident in a subset of individuals with developmental dyslexia
- RAN, sometimes referred to as naming speed or rapid naming, is the speed with which one can name visually-presented familiar stimuli such as letters, numbers, colors and objects out loud, and reflects the automaticity of processes which are also important for reading

Norton et al 2014  www.chasingyourpotential.com




- "Across every language tested to date, naming-speed tests represent one of the two best predictors of reading ability, along with tests for phoneme awareness"
- "These components of naming speed represent a miniversion or subset of the same processes and subprocesses found in reading, all of which must function smoothly and rapidly if the individual is to produce a verbal match for an abstract, visually represented symbol or word."

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- Students with both the naming speed deficit AND the phonological processing deficit are considered to have a "double deficit" and have more severe difficulties than those with just one of the two areas of weakness.

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Not all disorders of reading are dyslexia. Can have comprehension disorder, fluency disorder.

Not all learning disorders are dyslexia.

Not all who appear to struggle to read are dyslexic.



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So, what can a "parent" do to help?



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"A child with dyslexia is in need of a champion, someone who will be his support and his unflinching advocate; his cheerleader when things are not going well; his friend and confidant when others tease and shame him; his advocate who by actions and comments will express optimism for his future. Perhaps most important, the struggling reader needs someone who will not only believe in him but will translate that belief into positive action by understanding the nature of his reading problem and then actively and relentlessly working to ensure that he receives the reading help and other support he needs."

Shaywitz, S. *Overcoming Dyslexia* p 173



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1. Secure an evaluation you trust and understand.

- <https://dyslexiaida.org/evaluating-professionals/>
- <https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-assessment-what-is-it-and-how-can-it-help-2/>

Strengths? Weaknesses? Recommendations for school and home? Referrals – ask for names of people the evaluator trusts. (Credentials – are they familiar with or members of IDA.)

Ask questions. Ask for recommendations. And if reading is hard for you, ask the evaluator to provide a detailed feedback and ask to record it and bring a trusted friend.

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2. Secure the right kind of remediation! Maybe school, maybe privately, maybe a blend of both.

<https://dyslexiaida.org/effective-reading-instruction-for-students-with-dyslexia/>

Structured Literacy – explicitly teach the child about the structure of language and the sound-symbol relationship.

AND ASK! The practitioner has to be experienced.


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3. Identify and nurture strengths!

The diagram, titled "Sea of Strengths Model of Dyslexia", features a central black box labeled "Decoding" surrounded by seven other colored ovals: Reasoning (yellow), Concept formation (purple), Comprehension (red), General knowledge (green), Problem solving (teal), Vocabulary (orange), and Critical thinking (light blue). The entire model is set against a dark blue background with a white border.

© Sally Shaywitz, Overcoming Dyslexia, 2003


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4. Secure accommodations

"Remediate the phonologic weakness and access the higher-level thinking and reasoning strengths (through accommodation)." – Shaywitz, S. OD 172


- <https://dyslexiaida.org/accommodations-for-students-with-dyslexia/>
- [Overview of Instructional and Assistive Technology: Critical Tools for Students Who Struggle - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](#)

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- Accommodations involving materials
 - READ WITH THEIR EARS!!! Bookshare, Learning Ally
 - Use a tape recorder, livescribe pen
 - Clarify or simplify written directions
 - Present a small amount of work at a time
 - Block out extraneous stimuli
 - Highlight essential information
 - Provide a glossary in content areas
 - Word banks on tests
 - List of commonly misspelled words

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- Accommodations involving interactive instruction:
 - Use explicit teaching procedures – advanced organizers, guided practice, corrective practice
 - Repeat directions
 - In their own words
 - Break down steps
 - Simplify
 - Read directions to/with students
 - Try picture directions or lists


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Special Education

- Accommodations involving interactive instruction (continued):
 - Maintain daily routines
 - Provide copies or outlines of lecture notes
 - Provide students with graphic organizers
 - Use step-by-step instruction
 - Simultaneously combine verbal and visual info
 - Write key points and words on the chalkboard
 - Emphasize daily review


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Special Education

- Accommodations involving student performance:
 - Change response mode
 - Provide an outline of the lecture
 - Encourage use of graphic organizers
 - Place the student close to the teacher
 - Encourage use of an assignment book or calendar
 - Reduce copying by including information or activities on handouts or worksheets


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Special Education

- Accommodations involving student performance (continued):
 - Use cues to denote important items
 - Design hierarchical worksheets
 - Allow use of instructional aids (letter strips)
 - Display work samples
 - Use peer-mediated learning
 - Encourage note sharing


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- Accommodations involving student performance (continued):
 - Use flexible work times
 - Provide additional practice
 - Use assignment substitution or adjustments

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5. Monitor social-emotional well being.

- Watch for changes in eating, sleeping, desire to do what they used to enjoy
- Praise Praise Praise effort; relish effort
- Be sure they have balance – do NOT withhold from sports, scouts, etc because of grades, etc.
- DO NOT keep in from recess to finish work
- DO NOT compare to siblings or others in class
- Lighten load! Homework, classes, etc
- College student? 5 year plan maybe? Summers?
- <https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-and-resilience-in-adults-a-psychologists-perspective/>

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6. Address comorbidities.....

- Working memory
- Attention
- Other language issues
- Dysgraphia
- [Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(AD/HD\) and Dyslexia - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](#)
- [Working Memory: The Engine for Learning - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](#)


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7. Keep a lifespan prospective (Shaywitz book)

- Treatments, strategies, interventions change over time.
- Interventions may be needed – and are available – across the lifespan! College, career, licensing tests, etc.
- [Adolescents and Adults with Dyslexia - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](https://dyslexiaida.org)
- [APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS ON COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTS - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](https://dyslexiaida.org)
- [APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS ON GRADUATE SCHOOL ENTRANCE TESTS - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](https://dyslexiaida.org)
- [Transitioning from High School to College - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](https://dyslexiaida.org)


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8. Take care of yourself. Get support. Find your tribe.

Parents of children who have invisible special needs often feel isolated judged & frustrated until they meet other parents sharing a similar journey

by Susan Zebels - Parents Supporting Parents

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Another nice article for future reference.

<https://ldaamerica.org/info/what-do-parents-of-children-with-learning-disabilities-adhd-and-related-disorders-deal-with/>

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