REGION 4
EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Fidelity Statement

Reading by Design®

Region 4 Education Service Center's dyslexia intervention, *Reading by Design: An Individualized Reading Intervention*, is a systematic, multisensory approach aligned with research-based practices for developing literacy and is designed for students with basic reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. This intervention follows an intensive, explicit, and cumulative design for the remediation of reading and writing skills at all grade levels.

Implementation of *Reading by Design* with fidelity is critical to the success of students. According to the National Center on Intensive Intervention, "Fidelity refers to how closely prescribed procedures are followed and, in the context of schools, the degree to which educators implement programs, assessments, and implementation plans the way they were intended." (National Center on Intensive Intervention, Retrieved February 2022, https://intensiveintervention.org/implementation-intervention/fidelity)

The Dyslexia Handbook states, "...because effective intervention requires highly structured and systematic delivery, it is critical that those who provide intervention for students with dyslexia be trained in the program used and that the program is implemented with fidelity." (Texas Education Agency, 2024, 41)

Student progress should also be considered. Progress monitoring should include measuring and recording growth. Decisions about student placement and increasing intensity of program participation should be made by the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) or 504 Committee.

Reading by Design includes volumes 1-5. Completion of this intervention requires the use of all five volumes. Each volume is essential and must be used in sequence. The only exception is for older students who show mastery of an end-of-volume mastery check and are placed in a higher volume.

Reading by Design Fidelity Components:

I. Groups meet 4 to 5 days per week.
II. Groups meet for a minimum of 45 minutes per session.
III. Groups should not exceed six students in elementary settings and eight students in secondary settings.
IV. Teachers must be trained by a regional education service center to utilize the program. Teachers may also receive training from a trainer certified by Region 4 and who is currently in good standing.

Fidelity Component Research:

I. Groups meet 4 to 5 days per week.

*Reading instruction must be delivered with great intensity. Optimally, a child who is struggling to read should be in a group no larger than four to five students with an instructor. The child should receive this specialized reading instruction **4 to 5 days** a week. A larger group will greatly undermine the possibility of success, since they will have far fewer opportunities to interact with their teacher and therefore will often lose interest or attention during the long pauses between being called on.* (Shaywitz 2020, 282; Texas Education Agency, 2024, 48)

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II. **Groups meet for a minimum of 45 minutes per session.**

It is recommended that students complete one lesson per day. To complete all required components daily, 45-minute sessions are necessary to meet this goal.

The 45-minute time block does not include transition times; it refers to direct instructional time.

Recommendations for Dyslexia Intervention in a Secondary Block Schedule

- Add sessions on opposite days (e.g., in an advisory, homeroom, or elective block).
- Avoid a 3- or 4-day gap between sessions (i.e., Friday–Tuesday or Thursday–Monday). Skill retention suffers with these gaps.
- Work with campus schedules to find consistent, protected blocks (e.g., electives, labs, advisory periods).
- Double-block reading or intervention classes to allow for daily support.
- Embed intervention within a reading support class, special education resource time, or structured study hall.
- Consider training interventionists who can push in or pull out on flexible schedules.

III. Groups should have a maximum number of six students in elementary settings and eight students in secondary settings.

Reading instruction must be delivered with great intensity. Optimally, a child who is struggling to read should be in a group ***no larger than four to five students with an instructor****.* (Shaywitz 2020, 282; Texas Education Agency, 2024, 48)

Research shows smaller teacher-to-student ratios (such as 1:3) are more effective than large groups (such as 1:10). (Vaughn and Linan-Thompson 2003; Texas Education Agency, 2024, 49)

IV. Teachers must be trained by a regional educational service center to utilize the program. Teachers may also receive training from a trainer certified by Region 4 and who is currently in good standing.

In addition, because effective intervention requires highly structured and systematic delivery, it is critical that those who provide intervention for students with dyslexia be ***trained in the program*** *used and that the program is implemented with fidelity.* (Texas Education Agency 2024, 41)

Professional practitioners, including ***teachers or therapists, should have had specific preparation in the prevention and remediation of language-based reading and writing difficulties****. Teachers and therapists should be able to state and provide documentation of their credentials in the prevention and remediation of language-based reading and writing difficulties, including program-specific training recommended for the use of specific programs.* (International Dyslexia Association 2009; Texas Education Agency 2024, 42)

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*To provide effective intervention, school districts are encouraged to employ **highly trained individuals** to deliver dyslexia instruction. Teachers, such as reading specialists, master reading teachers, general education classroom teachers, or special education teachers, who provide dyslexia intervention for students are not required to hold a specific license or certification. However, these educators must **at a minimum have additional documented dyslexia training** aligned to 19 TAC §74.28(c) and **must deliver the instruction with fidelity**.* (Texas Education Agency 2024, 41-43) For students not responding to an instructional program, adjustments, such as changes to instructional time or frequency, should be considered.

Additional Guidance from *The Dyslexia Handbook, 2024*:

While the components of instruction for students with dyslexia include good teaching principles for all teachers, the explicitness and intensity of the instruction, fidelity to program descriptors, grouping formats, and training and skill of the teachers are wholly different from core classroom instruction and must be considered when making individual placement decisions. (Texas Education Agency 2024, 38)

Reading by Design Placement

Placement: Preassessment data can be used to determine most students' appropriate placement in the intervention program based on his or her strengths and weaknesses. Most students will need to begin the intervention with Volume 1, Lesson 1 while other students may need to begin with a later volume to best meet their needs.

Grouping: Preassessment data can be used to determine which students have similar strengths and weaknesses and can be grouped homogeneously to begin the intervention program at the most appropriate lesson.

Groups should be organized with one level of students in the same volume and lesson. It is not appropriate to have different lessons or volumes in the same intervention group or to split the minimum time between two groups.

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Exiting Reading by Design Intervention

Shaywitz outlines the following essentials for a successful reading intervention and effective early intervention program:

One of the most common errors in teaching a child with dyslexia to read is to withdraw prematurely instruction that seems to be working. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition and requires ongoing intervention and support to ensure that not only the child's accuracy, but also their fluency improves enough that they are reading accurately as well as rapidly and with good prosody. CAUTION: A child who is reading accurately but not fluently at grade level still requires intensive reading instruction. (Shaywitz 2020, 283–284)

Decisions to exit a student from dyslexia intervention will be made by an ARD committee. When considering discontinuation criteria, it is important to ensure that an intervention does not end prematurely. The ARD Committee should consider the following:

1- What does progress monitoring data show?
2- Is the student approximating grade level standards?
3- Has the student acquired the skills taught in the program?
4- Has the student maintained the progress made in the program and is able to apply learned skills automatically, effectively, and efficiently in the classroom?
5- Did the student successfully complete the entire intervention program? (Mastery Check suggested standards are included within the program.)

Virtual Instruction Guidance

Although teaching dyslexia intervention lessons in a virtual environment is not ideal, students must receive intervention regardless of their current setting. Furthermore, The Dyslexia Handbook outlines the standards for the implementation of dyslexia intervention programs with fidelity. The criteria for instruction are listed as:

- *"evidence-based and effective for students with dyslexia;*
- *taught by an appropriately trained instructor; and*
- *implemented with fidelity."* (Texas Education Agency 2024, 38)

Please note that the introduction to new material from *Reading by Design* is only possible with explicit, systematic instruction from an appropriately trained instructor. Fidelity of instruction necessitates teacher and student interaction for active engagement of the student and immediate feedback and progress monitoring from the teacher. Therefore, when teaching *Reading by Design* lessons remotely, every effort should be made to maintain the fidelity of the lesson through live sessions on virtual platforms and, when necessary, incorporate the use of digital tools to provide multisensory and engaging lessons.

Recorded lessons, including recordings of teachers using the reading deck, are not recommended since the necessary interaction with students would be missing, therefore nullifying the fidelity of the program.

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Reading by Design Volume 0

Reading by Design® Volume 0 is **not** considered part of the core intervention. This volume is for students who need additional intervention with foundational components of literacy prior to, or in conjunction with, starting Reading by Design Volume 1. This volume may also be used with struggling readers not identified with dyslexia.

It is not necessary for students to complete all lessons in Volume 0; rather, the interventionist determines the need based on student data and performance.

Volume 0 Lessons should be delivered:

I. Groups meet 4 to 5 days per week.
II. Groups meet for 30–45 minutes per session.
III. Groups should not exceed six students.
IV. Teachers must be trained by a regional education service center to utilize the program. Teachers may also receive training from a trainer certified by Region 4 and who is currently in good standing.

For additional information, please contact your regional education service center or email *R4Dyslexia@esc4.net*

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Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding of the Fidelity Statement
(For LEA use only)

Signature of Interventionist	
Print Name	
Date	
Return signed document to (supervisor)	

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