



**Dyslexia 101 For Parents:
Unlocking the keys to
your child's success.**

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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
2024 Update

[Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#)

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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 are difficulties with:

- reading words in isolation
- accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- spelling

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



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Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences



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But what **IS** the problem???



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Kindergarten

- Reading represents a code, the alphabetic code.
- The "alphabetic code" refers to the system of letters (graphemes) that represent sounds (phonemes) in a language. For example, in English, the letter "c" can represent the /k/ sound in "cat" or the /s/ sound in "ceiling."
- 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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Kindergarten

- After hearing a sound and directing attention to it, the brain's first major step in processing spoken language is typically **phoneme recognition**—identifying and categorizing the individual speech sounds. This is crucial because phonemes form the building blocks of words.
- 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.
- This is crucial for both speaking and reading.

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Phoneme, you say??

- A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a language that makes a difference in its meaning.
- English has 44 phonemes
- 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 crisp and clear.

Carved Letter Blocks analogy.

- New block - a well-defined, crisp "A" is easy to read.
- Old ones, the edges wear down, the letter fades, and one has to squint, tilt, or guess what it used to say.
- For children with dyslexia, phonemes are like those older blocks. Their brain doesn't perceive the phonemes as sharply as a typical learner does. Instead of clear-cut sounds, they experience a fuzzier, less distinct version.
- During retrieval, when they search their brain for the right phoneme, it's like reaching into a box of letter blocks where some are faded or smudged. They grab the closest match, but sometimes it's the wrong one—leading to mix-ups like: **Ocean** (when they meant *lotion*), **Emeny** (when they meant *enemy*)
- Their brain recognizes that the two words share similar phonetic features, but because their phonemic awareness is **less precise**, they accidentally substitute a similar-sounding word.



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- Folks with dyslexia have difficulty developing an awareness that spoken and written words are comprised of these phonemes or building blocks.
- It impacts both reading and spelling. In reading, we begin with the intact printed word on the page: The block representing phonemes are all lined up correctly. The reader's job is to convert the letters into their sounds and appreciate that the words are composed of smaller segments or phonemes.



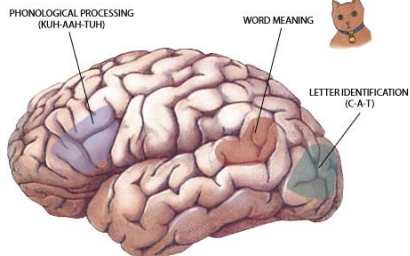
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Typical reading areas of the brain



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- Shaywitz quote – page 44
- Poem

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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 – IDA SAYS ABOUT 1 in 5

NOT RESPONSIVE TO STANDARD
READING INSTRUCTION

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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.

[DYSLEXIA BASICS - International Dyslexia Association](#)

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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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- 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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Child #1: Normal Reader

Child #12: with Reading Difficulties

Right Hemisphere

Left Hemisphere

Strong activation pattern

Weak activation pattern

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S#3 Before After

S#4 Before After

Decreased activity in right hemisphere

Increased activity in left hemisphere

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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". Surrounding it are eight colorful ovals representing strengths: Reasoning (yellow), Concept formation (purple), Comprehension (red), General knowledge (green), Problem solving (teal), Vocabulary (orange), Critical thinking (light blue), and Reasoning (yellow). The text "© Sally Shaywitz, Overcoming Dyslexia, 2003" and the logo "chasing your potential" are at the bottom.

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 \(dyslexiaida.org\)](#)

Accommodations

.....accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. **Accommodations are not one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the necessary accommodation....**


Special Considerations

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided) or teacher outlines.
- Note-taking assistance
- Permission to record classes (evernote)
- Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (chunking assignments into manageable unites, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- Priority seating assignment

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Special Considerations

- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word banks
- Text to speech
- Speech to text
- Electronic spellers
- Electronic dictionaries
- Formula charts
- Adaptive learning tools and features in software programs
- Audiobooks
 - <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487109>




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Special Considerations


A child who reads printed text at 60 words a minute may jump to 300 words a minute with a device that allows her to hear text as she reads.

[How to Advocate for Assistive Technology Tools and Services - International Dyslexia Association](#)


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 Special Class


- 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
- List of commonly misspelled words

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 Special Class


- Use teaching procedures such as advanced organizers, guided practice, corrective practice
- Simplify and repeat directions
 - In their own words
 - Break down steps
 - Read directions to/with students
 - Try picture directions or lists
- 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 Class

- 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
 - (more next slide)


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- Accommodations involving student performance (continued):
 - Have students turn lined paper vertically for math
 - Use cues to denote important items
 - Allow use of instructional aids (letter strips)
 - Display work samples
 - Use peer-mediated learning
 - Encourage note sharing
 - Use flexible work times
 - 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 \(dyslexiaida.org\)](http://dyslexiaida.org)
- [APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS ON COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTS - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](http://dyslexiaida.org)
- [APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS ON GRADUATE SCHOOL ENTRANCE TESTS - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](http://dyslexiaida.org)
- [Transitioning from High School to College - International Dyslexia Association \(dyslexiaida.org\)](http://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 Zickler - Parents Supporting Parents

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FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR NOT KNOWING WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE YOU LEARNED IT.

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

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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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