



## Dyslexia and Language

### What is Dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a lifelong, language-based learning difference that is rooted in the reading and writing centers of the brain (Academy in Manayunk, 2022).
- According to the *International Dyslexia Association (IDA)*, “people with dyslexia have been found to have problems with identifying speech sounds within a word and/or learning how letters represent those sounds [phonology], a key factor in their reading difficulties” (2012). Children who are diagnosed with dyslexia present with difficulty acquiring and retaining those phonological and orthographical, or printed letters, skills needed for reading and writing.
- A misconception about dyslexia is that it is a “visually based” disorder, where it is in fact *language-based*.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, “dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or desire to learn” (IDA, 2012).

### Dyslexia and Language

- *Language* is a rule-based system that allows individuals to communicate with one another.
- Language areas impacted by dyslexia can include speaking, reading, writing, and listening.
- Because dyslexia is language-based, children with dyslexia may present with associated weaknesses in these areas, and executive functioning, not *just* phonology.<sup>2</sup>

### The Role of the Speech-Language Therapist

- Dyslexia is within the scope of the speech-language therapist, who is a major contributor to intervention in language and literacy.
- Children with dyslexia are at risk for language or speech impairment, therefore a speech-language therapist can support expressive or comprehension skills that are impacted by dyslexia.
- Secondary to dyslexia, children may have difficulty in reading comprehension, which impacts vocabulary development, as well as an enriched experience and participation in the curriculum.<sup>3</sup> The speech-language therapist may directly treat vocabulary and other skills that impact reading comprehension.

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<sup>1</sup> Hogan, Tiffany (2018). *Five Ways Speech-Language Pathologists can positively impact children with dyslexia*. MGH Institute of Health Professionals. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2018\\_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0102](https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0102).

<sup>2</sup> Hogan, Tiffany (2018). *Five Ways Speech-Language Pathologists can positively impact children with dyslexia*. MGH Institute of Health Professionals. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2018\\_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0102](https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0102).

<sup>3</sup> Academy in Manayunk (2022), *Pathways to Proficient Reading*. AIM Institute for Learning and Research.

### **Intervention and instruction in the classroom**

- Dyslexia requires explicit and systematic instruction of the letter-sound systems.<sup>4</sup>
- For children who struggle with comprehension (answering “wh- questions), annotation, summarization, and context clues, skills and strategies can be taught and carried into the classroom.
- Children with dyslexia may struggle with expressive language, which is evidenced in speaking *and* writing. Therefore, direct teaching of story structure, syntax, vocabulary development, and paragraph structure may be assisted.
- Overall, children with dyslexia present with a multitude of strengths, and it is important to empower these young readers.

If you're interested in Speech-Language services at AIM for your child, please contact [supportservices@aimpa.org](mailto:supportservices@aimpa.org).

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<sup>4</sup> Academy in Manayunk (2022), *Pathways to Proficient Reading*. AIM Institute for Learning and Research.

