

Denton ISD



Parent and Teacher Dyslexia Guidebook

*All children deserve the opportunity
to read and write with success.*

*Information for this resource was taken from the TEA *Dyslexia Handbook*,
Updated 2018 and from International Dyslexia Association publications.

What is Dyslexia?

The student who struggles with reading and spelling often puzzles teachers and parents. The student displays ability to learn in the absence of print and receives the same classroom instruction that benefits most children; however, the student continues to struggle with some or all of the many facets of reading and spelling. This student may be a student with Dyslexia. Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines Dyslexia and related disorders in the following way:

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

“Related disorders” include disorders similar to or related to Dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental Dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The International Dyslexia Association defines “Dyslexia” in the following way:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Characteristics of Dyslexia

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

Students identified as having Dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in:

- Phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness and manipulation
- Single-word reading
- Reading fluency
- Spelling
- Consequences may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression.

These difficulties in phonological awareness are:

- Unexpected for the student's age and educational level
- Not primarily the result of language difference
- There is often a family history of similar difficulties.

The reading/spelling characteristics are usually associated with:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
- Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

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

Most Common Co-Occurring Disorders With Dyslexia:

- **Developmental Language Disorders**
Including Expressive and Receptive Language and/or Articulation Disorders
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**
This is a medical diagnosis often characterized by difficulty sustaining mental effort and attention, being easily distracted, fidgeting with hands and feet, squirming when sitting, and impulsivity
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder**
All people, young and old, can experience overwhelming stress and exhibit signs of anxiety, but children, adolescents, and adults with dyslexia are particularly vulnerable. That's because many individuals do not fully understand the nature of their learning disability, and as a result, tend to blame themselves for their own difficulties.
- **Twice Exceptional**
Twice-exceptional students may not initially appear to be at risk for Dyslexia. Twice exceptional, or 2e, is a term used to describe students who are both intellectually gifted and learning disabled, which may include students with Dyslexia.

Parents and teachers may fail to notice either giftedness or Dyslexia in a student as the Dyslexia may mask giftedness or the giftedness may mask Dyslexia.

Remember:

These additional conditions can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of instruction provided to students with Dyslexia.

- Acknowledging that students with Dyslexia must exert extra effort to meet grade-level expectations, all the factors that may affect learning must be considered when identifying and providing instruction for students with Dyslexia.
- ADHD or symptoms of anxiety, anger, depression, or low self-esteem may lower a student's engagement in learning.
- Educators and parents should provide students with affirmation and an environment that fosters engagement and success.

“Although Dyslexia affects individuals over the life span . . . reading skills can be increased with the right early intervention and prevention programs.”

—Judith Birsh, 2011

Critical Components of Dyslexia Instruction

- Phonological awareness – the understanding of internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language. Students must be explicitly taught how to segment spoken words into their component phonemes.
- Sound-symbol association – systematic, explicit instruction of the knowledge of various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds.
- Syllabication – Dividing words into syllables must be directly taught. A syllable is a unit of language with one vowel sound.
- Orthography – the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language; instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge.
- Morphology – study of how morphemes, or the smallest unit of meaning in a language, are combined to form words.
- Syntax – a set of principles that dictate sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation, and the mechanics of language.
- Reading comprehension – constructing meaning from a text
- Reading fluency – the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension.

Famous People with Dyslexia

- Maggie3 Aderin-Pocock - Astronomer and space scientist
- Orlando Bloom – Actor
- Richard Branson – Actor
- Tom Cruise – Actor
- Leonardo da Vinci – Artist/ Painter
- Walt Disney
- Jim Carrey – Actor, Comedian
- Robin Williams – Actor, Comedian
- Albert Einstein – Physicist
- John Lennon – Musician, member of The Beatles
- Sally Gardner – Children’s author and illustrator
- Whoopi Goldberg – Comedian, actress, political activist, talk show host; won multiple awards including Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Emmy
- John F. Kennedy, George Washington, George W. Bush
- Pablo Picasso – Artist
- Steven Spielberg – Movie director
- Dominic Wood – English magician
- Salma Hayek – Actress, political activist
- Tommy Hilfiger – Fashion Designer
- Hans Christian Anderson – Author of many children’s stories including “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Little Match Girl,” and “The Little Mermaid.”
- Steve Jobs – CEO of Apple

Dyslexia Facts and Stats

- Dyslexia occurs in people of all backgrounds and intellectual levels.
- It is a neurological disorder and often runs in families. It is not something a person “grows out of.”
- Men and women are equally likely to have Dyslexia.
- Somewhere between 25-40% of children with Dyslexia also have ADHD. Approximately 25% of children with ADHD also have Dyslexia.
- Dyslexia has NOTHING to do with lack of trying.
- Dyslexia is found across all languages and cultures.
- With appropriate teaching methods and motivation, people with Dyslexia can successfully learn anything.

Common strengths of individuals with Dyslexia:

- Gifted in math and mechanical abilities.
- Good at problem solving and “seeing the big picture.”
- Show creativity when solving all kinds of problems.
- Show strong verbal skills and social skills.
- Creative, artistic, musical, and strong in design.
- Strong in 3-D visual-spatial skills.

Common weaknesses of individuals with Dyslexia:

- May have experienced a delay in speech development.
- Problems with organization and time-keeping
- Deficits in cognitive Working Memory, which involves remembering instructions, names, dates, and facts.
- Directional confusion and following instructions.

10 Things You Can Do To Help a Struggling Reader

1. Notice and talk about your child’s strengths.
2. Celebrate every success.
3. Be honest with yourself and set realistic goals for your child.
4. Don’t let poor spelling stop your child. Encourage him/her to use a dictionary, spell-check software, text-prediction software, and/or speech-to-text software.
5. Share your own difficulties with your kids.
6. Read aloud to your child. It’s fun and helpful.
7. Work as a team with teachers. Kids feel supported when they see parents and teachers working together to help them.
8. Help your child remember that small steps can bring BIG improvements.
9. Help your children remember that it’s okay to read slowly.
10. Teach your children how to help themselves, how to see their own strengths and weaknesses, how to find resources that help them, and how to advocate for themselves.

Online Resources

- The Dyslexia Handbook 2018 Update, TEA: <https://bit.ly/3cE8Gps>
- International Dyslexia Association <https://dyslexiaida.org/>
- Learning Ally: www.learningally.org
- Multi-Sensory Publications: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Domain/7432>
- The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity: <https://dyslexia.yale.edu/>
- Decoding Dyslexia Texas: www.ddtx.org/
- Neuhaus Education Center: www.neuhaus.org
- LD Online: www.ldonline.org
- Scottish Rite for Children: <https://scottishriteforchildren.org/care-and-treatment/dyslexia>
- LEAD/ Literacy Education & Academic Development: <http://www.leadabcd.com/>
- Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators: <https://www.ortonacademy.org/>

Great Books for Parents and Teachers

- *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz
- *The Dyslexic Advantage: Unlacking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain* by B.I. Eide, P. Costanzo, et al.
- *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson
- *Teaching Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, OWL, LD, and Dyscalculia* by Virginia. Berninger & Beverly Wolf
- *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (novel)

Great Books for Children with Dyslexia

- *The Alphabet War* by Diane Burton Rob & Gail Piazza
- *Gritty Ninja: A Children's Book About Dealing with Frustration and Developing Perseverance* by Mary Nhin
- *Dyslexia is My Superpower* by Margaret Rooke
- *Thank you, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco

Denton ISD Resources

- **Denton ISD Dyslexia Coordinator**
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940-369-0054, jkenny@dentonisd.org
 - **Denton ISD Dyslexia Website:**
<https://www.dentonisd.org/Domain/7432>
 - **Campus Dyslexia Therapist Contact Info:**
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