

Dyslexia Fact Sheet

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, each school district will screen students in Grades K-2 for weaknesses in literacy skill development that may be associated with dyslexia.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is:

- A difference in the brain that makes processing speech sounds difficult, specifically the ability to hear, substitute, and change individual sounds in words.
- Characterized by challenges with reading and spelling, particularly with the connections between letters and sounds.
- Likely to lead to problems learning and remembering vocabulary, understanding what is read, and getting thoughts on paper.
- Not related overall intelligence.
- Not a visual problem or caused by a lack of motivation, interest, exposure to rich literature, or ineffective classroom instruction.



VIDEO: [What is Dyslexia/Dyslexia Explained by Margie Gillis with Understand.org](#)

Focus on Strengths

All children, including those with dyslexia, have strengths, and we can use those strengths to advance their learning. Children with dyslexia have talents & interests and should be encouraged. Children with dyslexia may have strong verbal and thinking skills, such as:

- Creative, outside-of-the box problem-solving skills.
- Listening skills.
- Imagination and curiosity skills
- recognizing patterns.
- Building, assembling, and working with objects.
- Athletic, artistic, or musical skills.



What Helps?

With appropriate instruction and supports, a child with dyslexia can learn to read and write. Beneficial instruction is clear and based on evidence-based practices that are aligned with educational research and science.



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Common Struggles

Each Child is different

Dyslexia looks different for each child and across ages and stages. It is common for people with dyslexia to struggle pronouncing words with two or more syllables, as well as:

Preschool through Kindergarten

- Delayed speech (age 2-3)
- Following directions
- Learning & remembering letter names
- Rhyming

- Poor and inconsistent spelling
- Mixing up terms for concepts and objects (i.e. bagel/doughnut)
- Avoidance behaviors

Early School Years

- Connecting letters to sounds
- Getting thoughts on paper
- Following multi-step directions
- Memorizing math facts and solving word problems
- Slow or choppy reading, even with very small or common words
- Leaving out words, parts of words, and sounds when reading

Later School Years

- Reading aloud
- Reading and writing words with two or more syllables
- Keeping up with large amounts of reading and writing
- Writing Tasks (assignments, essays, emails, taking notes, etc.)
- Learning a foreign language.



Connecting with Schools

A family/school partnership is essential for student success. The first step when you are concerned about your child's progress is to make an appointment to talk to the teacher to discuss:

- Your concerns and questions.
- The teacher's concerns and questions.
- Steps to learn more about your child's struggles and needs.
- Plan a follow-up meeting to share findings & discuss connecting instruction to your child's needs.



Classroom Supports

Accommodations Create Access

In addition to appropriate instruction, accommodations help children with dyslexia in the classroom and increase their independence. Some supports that students find helpful include:

- Extended time for reading and writing.
- Breaking up long assignments.
- Quiet place for studying and testing.
- Audio books (including for textbooks) or computer support for reading (i.e. Bookshare or Learning Ally).
- Computers with dictation software. Closed captions when watching videos to reinforce word knowledge. See ORBIDA for more information.



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Social Emotional Support

Build on Strengths and Advocacy Skills

Children with dyslexia may also struggle with self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. You can foster positive attitudes and resiliency by:

- Discovering and encouraging your child's strengths, interests, and passions.
- Pursuing hands-on learning opportunities about your community and world.
- Reading to and with your children, watching videos, and listening to texts on current classroom topics.
- Focusing on your child's progress and success.
- Teaching your child that everyone has strengths and struggles.
- How to ask for help and talk about their needs (self-advocacy).



Resources

- [OSPI Dyslexia Site and Resource Guide](#)
- [International Dyslexia Association \(IDA\) Washington Branch of IDA](#)
- [Spanish Information on Dyslexia](#)
- [National Center for Improving Literacy](#)
- [Understood](#)
- [University of Michigan Dyslexia Help](#)
- [Watch this one with your kids! See Dyslexia Differently](#)

