

October is

Dyslexia Awareness Month

What Is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia (dis-LEK-see-uh) is a type of learning disability that affects 1 in 5 students. It is the term used when people have trouble learning to read, even though they're smart enough and want to learn.

What Causes Dyslexia?

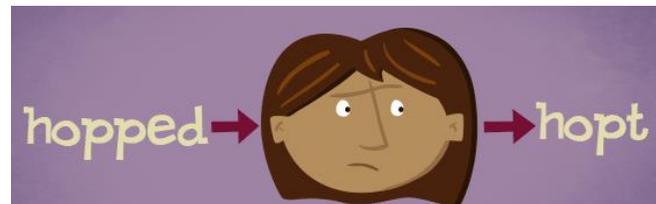
Dyslexia is not a disease. It's a neurological condition someone is born with, and it often runs in families. Most have average or above-average intelligence, and they work very hard to overcome their learning problems.

What Happens in Dyslexia?

Reading is a little like riding a bike: it requires doing many things at once with precise timing. With practice, typical readers gradually learn to read words automatically so they can focus their mental energy on comprehending and remembering what they've read.

Kids with dyslexia, though, have trouble with phonemic awareness and phonics, so reading doesn't become automatic and stays slow and labored. When a child struggles with these beginning steps in reading, then comprehension is bound to suffer and frustration is likely to follow.

A common assumption about dyslexia is that letters or words appear reversed — that "was" appears like "saw." This type of problem can be a part of dyslexia, but reversals are very common among kids up until first or second grade, not just kids with dyslexia. The major problem for kids with dyslexia is in phonemic awareness, phonics, and rapid word recognition.



How Is Dyslexia Diagnosed?

Dyslexia is usually diagnosed during elementary school. In some cases, it doesn't become apparent until a child is older and expected to read and comprehend longer and more complex material. Continuing problems with advanced reading, spelling and learning a foreign language may be signs that a bright teenager has dyslexia.

Dyslexia can only be formally identified through a comprehensive evaluation by a reading specialist or psychologist, either at school or in the community. Pediatricians can also guide families to proper help.

Delays in identifying kids with dyslexia can create a bigger reading problem and a drop in self-esteem, so it's important to recognize symptoms early in elementary and begin specialized reading instruction right away.

What else should I know?

Fortunately, with the proper assistance and help, most kids with dyslexia are able to learn to read and develop strategies that allow them to be successful.

The following page lists some of the more common characteristics of dyslexia. If you think your child might have dyslexia, talk with your doctor, your child's teacher or a reading specialist. The sooner a reading problem is found, the sooner your child can get the proper help.

Help and support can also be found locally by Area Dyslexic Advocacy [www.facebook.com/groups/TADANC]

Common Characteristics of **Dyslexia**

Use this resource for general age ranges and symptoms of dyslexia. Professionals and parents need to look for clusters of symptoms – not just one or two symptoms. If your child or student has **three or more** of the characteristics, we would encourage you to learn more about dyslexia testing and about reading interventions that work for dyslexia.

Preschool & Kindergarten

- Difficulty pronouncing words correctly (mixing up the sounds or syllables)
- Delayed language and/or vocabulary development
- Left and right confusion
- Late choosing a dominant hand)
- Difficulty remembering the sequence of the alphabet or days of the week
- Can't remember how to tie shoelaces
- Can't create rhyming words or doesn't enjoy rhymes
- Difficulty quickly naming familiar things or objects
- Chronic ear infections
- Difficulty remembering how to spell their name, memorizing their address or phone number
- Coloring, pasting, and using a scissors is frustrating
- History of reading problems in a close relative

1st Grade – 4th Grade

- Delayed ability to connect letters to their sounds
- Reversals (b/d) and inversions (n/u) in letters or numbers beyond the end of 1st grade
- Can't remember sight words
- Difficulty sounding out unknown words
- Poor reading fluency – reading is choppy, slow and full of mistakes
- Poor spelling ability
- Guessing at unknown words in stories either from the shape of the words, context clues or pictures
- Comprehension is much better when information is listened to as opposed to reading to self
- Handwriting is difficult to read (dysgraphia)
- Math trouble – confusing math symbols, not understanding time and how to tell time, memorizing math facts, directionality
- Directionality confusion with positional words (before, after, left, right)
- Says the wrong words when speaking or makes up their own words
- Complains reading is hard or avoids reading tasks

5th Grade – 8th Grade

- Continued difficulty sounding out unknown words – especially multisyllabic words
- Oral reading fluency is weak – may leave off suffixes, omit parts of words or skip smaller words (an, in, the) when reading out-loud
- Reading progress continues to be very slow
- Word problems are extremely difficult in math
- Difficulty recalling math facts despite years of practice
- Spelling strategies and patterns are difficult to learn
- Written expression is weak - especially punctuation, capitalization, organization (ideas and content may be fantastic)

High School

- Reading difficulties have persisted
- Continued directionality confusion without the use of coping strategies
- Inaccurate spelling
- Poor written expression skills (verbal expression is generally much stronger than writing skills)
- Poor grades or may have to work twice as hard as peers to maintain grades
- Difficulty learning a foreign language
- Takes longer to complete work – especially reading and writing assignments
- Diminished vocabulary due to a lack of reading throughout the years
- Misunderstanding information that is read
- Summarizing is difficult
- Has to read text several times over in order to comprehend
- Doesn't read for pleasure, may become fatigued from reading
- Trouble pronouncing uncommon words such as names or locations

