

McALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DYSLEXIA PARENT AWARENESS

RECOGNIZING DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is:

- One of several distinct learning disabilities.
- Of constitutional origin and is NOT the result of a generalized developmental delay or sensory impairment.
- Language-based. There is a weak sensitivity to the sounds of language (insufficient phonological processing ability).
- Characterized by having difficulty reading or decoding single words. This difficulty is unexpected for the age and in comparison to other cognitive and academic abilities. Other language skills are often variably and conspicuously impaired, particularly writing and spelling.
- 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 usually 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 include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).
- Manifested by difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and socio-cultural opportunity.

Characteristics of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty saying the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Difficulty forming the shapes of the letters
- Difficulty writing the alphabet correctly in sequence
- Errors in naming letters
- Difficulty in learning and remembering printed words
- Repeated spelling errors
- Difficulty in handwriting
- Slow rate of writing
- Difficulty with reading comprehension

Characteristics which may be associated with dyslexia:

- Delay in spoken language
- Difficulty pronouncing words with sounds in the right order
- Difficulty finding the "right" word
- Late establishing preferred writing handedness
- Late learning right, left, and other directionality components
- Problems learning concept of time and temporal sequencing
- Family history of similar problems

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Trends and Tendencies:

- Grades slip downward year-to-year
- Inconsistent grades from day-to-day
- Inconsistent performance on standardized tests
- Confusion with math symbols, but not computation
- Math computation is better than word problems
- Memorized spelling is better than spontaneous spelling
- Homework is better quality than classwork
- Inordinate time spent on homework
- Deteriorated organization and study habits
- Deteriorating motivation and self-esteem
- Good grades but too much struggle is evident
- Chooses oral performance over written when given chance
- Compensation by use of pictures, prompt from teacher, etc.
- Stress reflected by irregular writing and uneven pencil pressure

Frequent, Common or Typical Behaviors:

- Short attention span
- Posture indicative of poor self-esteem
- Anxiety results in inappropriate behaviors
- Withdrawal
- Inordinate stress during performance time
- Cheating
- Overcompensation through pseudo-confidence
- Poor motivation resulting from lack of success
- Situational behaviors manifested in specific situation (child/teacher conflict) though not characteristic of student's general behavior

These students may exhibit intellectual ability, mechanical ability, and talent in non-academic areas, social skills, and other strengths.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO HELP A CHILD WITH DYSLEXIA?

Help your child understand the nature of his/her difficulty:

- Read books or view videos about dyslexia
- Emphasize the child's abilities instead of "disabilities"

Help other members of the family:

- Help others recognize and understand your child's learning disability. Family members often ask "who, what, where, and when" questions to get the necessary information.

Help your child locate and develop other talents:

- Sports, art, music, mechanics, hobbies, etc.
- Help improve your child's self-image by giving your child tasks he/she can master

- Give the child chores to do (e.g., setting the table for supper, clearing the dishes, and making the beds).
- Make short lists of tasks to help the child remember . A list is impersonal and reduces irritations. The child will gain satisfaction as he checks off tasks completed.
- Often children do not process multiple requests quickly or accurately . State your ideas in simple, clear, one-concept commands and ask the child to repeat what was said. Speaking at a slower rate of speed to the child is often helpful.

Structure the child's life at home:

- Stick to a regular routine for meals, play, TV, chores, homework, etc.
- Keep belongings in the same place. Help the child remember where to put them.
- Keep instructions simple – one at a time.
- Break tasks into small parts or steps.
- Relieve stress in weak areas.
- Guard against negative remarks, especially those referring to laziness or lack of effort.
- Avoid threats of punishment for such things as low grades, their need for repetition of directions, ineptness at simple tasks, etc.
- Set standards, goals, and expectations of achievement within reach of our child's abilities.

How can parent build self-esteem?

- Praise your child often and sincerely
- Don't constantly nag or criticize
- Catch your child doing well
- Give your child opportunities to succeed
- Tell your child you believe in him/or her
- Give your child lots of hugs and kisses
- Praise efforts that are working towards a goal
- Don't compare your child with anyone else
- Look for ways to make your child feel capable
- Encourage your child to make age appropriate decisions
- Give your child a chance to solve problems before jumping in
- Listen to our child's thoughts, feelings, and ideas without judging or criticizing

What strengths are we likely to see in individuals with dyslexia?

- Highly creative
- Links previously unrelated ideas, processes
- Finds new ways to do old things
- Problem solver
- Inventor
- Builder
- Diplomat
- Good sense of humor
- Likes and enjoys helping people
- May anticipate people's emotions
- Excels at individual sports
- Works better alone than with team
- Understands animals, plants, living things

- Mechanically inclined
- Wants to know how things work
- Likes to repair or make things better
- Enjoys working with hands
- Likes building things
- Scientific thinker
- Very curious and observant
- A good motivator
- Has high energy
- Enthusiastic
- Is open-minded

Parent Suggestions for Student Success:


- Parent(s) establish good study habits for the child. Consider a regular study schedule and a quiet study environment to address possible attention interference. Monitor nightly study to verify work is progressing or is completed.
- Work closely with your child's teacher. Regular communication between parent and teacher is necessary.
- Parent(s) consider reading to child 15 minutes a day or acquiring audiotapes of books for read along.
- Help child develop a positive attitude and understanding of self-worth.
- Read Chapters 15, 16, and 17 in *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz for additional reading support.

Resources:

1. Parenting a Struggling by Hall, S. & Moats, L. (2002) Broadway Books
2. Learning Outside the Lines by Mooney, J. & Cole, D: Simon & Schuster
3. Overcoming Dyslexia by Shaywitz, Sally
4. The International Dyslexia Association – <https://dyslexiaida.org>
5. LD-Online – www.ldonline.org
6. Understood for Learning and Attention Issues – www.understood.org
7. Learning Ally – www.learningally.org
8. Talking Book Program, State of Texas – www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html

Spanish Resources:

1. International Dyslexia Association – <https://dyslexiaida.org>
Refer to the following Fact Sheets:
 - Effective Reading Instruction for Students with Dyslexia
 - Dyslexia Basics
 - Understanding Dysgraphia
 - ADHD and Dyslexia
2. ¡Colorín Colorado – www.colorincolorado.org
Refer to the following:

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- Families:
 - Help Your Child Learn to Read – Tips by Age
 - Learning Together at Home
 - Schools and Families: An Important Partnership
 - The Preschool Years