

# **DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK**



**Heber Springs  
School District  
2017 - 2018**

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## Definition of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is defined in Arkansas Code Annotated 6-41-602 as a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin, characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition, poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from the phonological component of language. These characteristics are often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities. This definition is borrowed from the most widely accepted current definition of dyslexia that is used by the International Dyslexia Association:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological 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.

## Initial Screening

According to Arkansas Code Annotated 6-41-603, Heber Springs School District shall screen all students enrolled in grades K-2 or students in grades three or higher experiencing difficulty, as noted by a classroom teacher, with the following initial screeners:

### **Kindergarten**

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: Dibels PSF (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency)

Sound Symbol Recognition: Dibels NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency)

Alphabet Knowledge: Dibels LNF (Letter Naming Fluency)

Decoding Skills: Dibels NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency)

Rapid Naming: RAN (Rapid Automated Naming)

Encoding Skills: Word Journeys (Developmental Spelling Assessment)

### **First**

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: Dibels PSF (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency)

Sound Symbol Recognition: Dibels NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency)

Alphabet Knowledge: Dibels LNF (Letter Naming Fluency)

Decoding Skills: Dibels ORF (Oral Reading Fluency)

Rapid Naming: RAN (Rapid Automated Naming)

Encoding Skills: DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment)

### **Second**

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS)

Sound Symbol Recognition: Dibels NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency)

Alphabet Knowledge: Abecedarian Reading Assessment: Letter Knowledge

Decoding Skills: Dibels ORF (Oral Reading Fluency)

Rapid Naming: RAN (Rapid Automated Naming)

Encoding Skills: DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment)

### **Third or Higher**

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS)

Sound Symbol Recognition: Dibels NWF (Nonsense Word Fluency)

Alphabet Knowledge: Abecedarian Reading Assessment: Letter Knowledge

Decoding Skills: Dibels ORF (Oral Reading Fluency)

Rapid Naming: RAN (Rapid Automated Naming)

Encoding Skills: DSA (Developmental Spelling Assessment)

Students with an existing dyslexia diagnosis or with a sensory impairment are exempt from this screening in accord with A.C.A. 6-41-603.

## Level 1 Screeners

Students determined to be at-risk, shall have Level 1 screeners reviewed by a school-based decision-making team. Level 1 Screeners are the following:

- Dibels progress monitoring
- Writing samples
- Lexia levels
- Star reading level
- Standardized testing data

Students who score below or well below benchmark on Dibels assessments, shall receive Tier II Intervention services. Students whose scores fall in the bottom range of 6-15% of the grade level, shall receive Tier II Intervention services administered through pull-out services for 30 minutes daily. Students who fall in the bottom 1-5% of the grade level, shall receive Tier III Intervention services administered by a dyslexia interventionist 60 minutes daily. All interventions, including those administered in the classroom, shall be documented and filed for review by the decision-making team.

The team shall meet to review student records and progress, inform parents of concerns, and obtain parental consent when additional assessments are needed to determine if characteristics of dyslexia exist. The RTI team should consider the following factors:

- The child has received effective classroom instruction;
- The student has adequate intelligence or the ability to learn;
- The lack of progress is not due to sociocultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or background experiences.

## Level II Screeners

A Level II Dyslexia Screening will be administered for identifying and documenting the characteristics of dyslexia. Students who fail to show progress after Tier II or Tier III intervention, referred by a teacher, or requested by a parent may be administered a Level II Screener as determined by the school-based decision making team. Regardless of the process in place, the parents or guardians always have the right to request a referral for assessment. A referral form shall be completed with corresponding data. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, III and Test of Written Spelling (5th Edition) shall be used as Level II Screeners. Parents or legal guardians will be notified before any Level II Screeners are conducted, and they will be notified of the results of the evaluation. Additionally, parents or legal guardians will be provided with information including the characteristics of dyslexia, appropriate classroom interventions and accommodations for students with dyslexia, and the right to have students receive an independent, comprehensive dyslexia evaluation at the cost of the parent or legal guardian.

## Underlying Cause

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: WRMT-III (Phonological Awareness)

Rapid Naming: WRMT-III (Rapid Automatic Naming)

Letter Knowledge: WRMT-III (Letter Identification)

Decoding: WRMT-III (Word Attack)

Word Identification: WRMT-III (Word Identification)

Fluency: WRMT-III (Oral Reading Fluency)

Reading Comprehension: WRMT-III (Passage Comprehension)

Spelling: Test of Written Spelling - 5th Edition

Once a student has been administered the Level II Screeners, the following questions developed by the Luke Waites Center for Dyslexia and Learning Disorders at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children shall be considered by the school-based decision making team:

1. Does the student demonstrate one or more of the primary reading characteristics of dyslexia in addition to a spelling deficit?
2. Are the reading and spelling difficulties the result of a phonological processing deficit?
3. Are the reading, spelling, and phonological processing deficits unexpected? Does the student demonstrate cognitive ability to support age level academic learning?
4. Are there secondary characteristics of dyslexia evident in reading comprehension and written expression?
5. Does the student have strengths that could be assets? Are there coexisting deficits that may complicate identification and the response to intervention and may deserve further assessment and intervention?

### Independent Comprehensive Dyslexia Evaluation

A student being identified with dyslexia is not required for a school to provide characteristic of dyslexia intervention services, however, a parent or legal guardian may choose to have an independent comprehensive dyslexia evaluation for the student. The independent, comprehensive dyslexia evaluation should be completed by a: licensed psychological examiner, school psychology specialist, licensed speech-language pathologist, certified dyslexia testing specialist, or dyslexia therapist. **Parents are responsible for selecting the qualified individual to perform the comprehensive dyslexia evaluation and must cover the cost.** The school district will consider the outside identification and provide the student with interventions determined to be appropriate by the school district from a district dyslexia interventionist based upon the diagnosis and the student's parent or guardian will be notified of the reasoning.

## Instructional Approaches for Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia

If the school-based decision making team determines a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia as determined by the Level II Screeners, the student will be provided intervention services using a characteristic of dyslexia program delivered with fidelity. Students shall receive Phonics First, an Orton-Gillingham, systematic, multi-sensory based program.

In accord with Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing How to Meet the Needs of Children with Dyslexia, October, 2016, this program is systematic, sequential, cumulative, and follows a logical plan of presenting the alphabetic principle that targets the specific needs of the student without presuming prior skills or knowledge of the student. It is multi-sensory, research-based, and offered in a small group setting to teach students the components of reading instruction, including without limitation:

- Phonemic awareness to enable a student to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language;
- Graphophonemic knowledge for teaching the letter-sound plan of English;
- The structure of the English language that includes morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics;
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are carriers of meaning; and
- Strategies that students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension

All dyslexia interventionists administering the program are certified teachers trained in how to administer the program with fidelity.

### Reporting By School Districts

The superintendent shall annually report the results of the school district screening through APSCN eSchoolPlus to be collected in cycle 7 of each school year. In accord with Act 1039 publish on the school district website the dyslexia program used, number of students identified with characteristics of dyslexia, and the number of students who received intervention for dyslexia.

### 504 Plans

If it is determined that the student has functional difficulties in the academic environment due to characteristics of dyslexia, the necessary accommodations or equipment for the student shall be provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12131-12165, as the existed on February 1, 2013, if qualified under the applicable federal law.

## Monitoring and Exit Criteria

Upon successful completion of the Heber Springs School District Characteristics of Dyslexia program, as measured by program mastery checks completed, students will be exited from the district characteristics of dyslexia program. Additional criteria for exit may include, but is not limited to: state assessment data, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, teacher/parent observations, and individual characteristics of dyslexia program requirements.

Students who have exited the Heber Springs Public School Characteristics of Dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring during the first year. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:

- Progress reports
- Report cards
- State assessment data
- Teacher reports/checklists
- Parent reports/checklists
- Other program reports
- Additional assessment data

Students qualifying for dyslexia services identified as 504 will follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law.

No one factor is sufficient to warrant exiting a student from direct characteristics of dyslexia services. Dismissal is determined by a committee. The committee considers the following factors when recommending exiting or reduction of characteristics of dyslexia services:

- Completion of the district characteristics of dyslexia program
- Student proficiency in grade level standards
- Teacher recommendation
- Parent request

If a student has shown substantial progress, and the committee recommends the student for dismissal, a dismissal form will be completed and placed in the student's permanent folder.

### Benchmark Dates

September 15	Benchmark 1
December 8	Benchmark 2
March 9	Benchmark 3

### Tier 2 Progress Monitoring Dates

October 6	Progress Monitoring 1
October 20	Progress Monitoring 2
November 3	Progress Monitoring 3
November 17	Progress Monitoring 4
December 8	Progress Monitoring 5
January 12	Progress Monitoring 6
January 26	Progress Monitoring 7
February 9	Progress Monitoring 8
February 23	Progress Monitoring 9
March 30	Progress Monitoring 10
April 27	Progress Monitoring 11
May 11	Progress Monitoring 12

### Tier 3 Progress Monitoring

Tier 3 students shall be progress monitored on a weekly basis.

All students K-2 must receive the Benchmark Screeners. If a student receives reading instruction in a special education classroom, the special education teacher administers the Dibels assessment.

## Professional Development

Each teacher shall receive professional awareness on the characteristics of dyslexia and evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia. Professional awareness may be obtained online through Arkansas IDEAS, <http://www.arkansasideas.org> *Dyslexia: A Three Part Professional Development*.

## Characteristics of Dyslexia Referral Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

### Indicator Checklist

<b>Family History</b>	
	Other family members experienced learning problems
<b>Oral Language</b>	
	Difficulty understanding verbal directions
	Difficulty understanding stories read to him/her
	Difficulty correctly pronouncing phonemes or syllables of words in sequence: persistent baby talk (busgetti for spaghetti, mawn lower for lawn mower, fibe for five)
	Substitutes words with the same meaning for words in the text he/she can't pronounce, such as "car" for "automobile"
	Difficulty acquiring new vocabulary
	Difficulty finding the right words
	Unable to find the exact word; Speech that is not fluent; Pauses, hesitations when speaking; Lots of "um's"
	Imprecise language, such as vague references to "stuff" or "things" instead of the proper name of an object
	Unable to find the exact word; confusing words that sound alike: saying "tornado" instead of "volcano," substituting "lotion" for "ocean," or "humanity" for "humidity"
	Difficulty speaking in grammatically correct sentences
	Difficulty explaining ideas or elaborating on thoughts
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	
	Difficulty recognizing or producing rhyming words
	Difficulty isolating sounds in the beginning, final, and/or medial position
	Difficulty segmenting individual sounds in a word
	Difficulty blending sounds into a word
<b>Alphabet</b>	
	Difficulty learning or recalling the names of letters
	Difficulty learning or recalling the sounds of letters

<b>Decoding and Word Recognition</b>	
	Difficulty sounding out unfamiliar or nonsense words
	Difficulty reading words in isolation (lists)
	May confuse small words: at - to, said - and, does - goes
<b>Fluency</b>	
	Difficulty with reading accuracy in context
	Difficulty reading grade level text at expected rate
	Difficulty with reading with expression
<b>Spelling</b>	
	Difficulty memorizing words for spelling tests
	Difficulty spelling words in context, even after spelling them correctly on a spelling test
	Difficulty spelling words phonetically
<b>Comprehension</b>	
	Difficulty with reading comprehension, but not when read to
	Better understanding of words in context than words isolated in lists
<b>Written Expression</b>	
	Difficulty constructing sentences
	Difficulty organizing grade appropriate written compositions
	Difficulty producing sufficient written output
	Written expression does not match verbal expression (Content, organization, vocabulary)
<b>Handwriting</b>	
	Slow with handwriting tasks
	Overall poor quality/illegible handwriting on written assignment
	Awkward, fist-like, or tight pencil grip
<b>Cognitive/Academic Ability</b>	
	The student appears to have intellectual ability equal to or above grade level peers.
	The student has grade level math calculation skills.
	The student appears to have grade level math reasoning skills.
	The student has reading difficulties that are unexpected compared to other abilities.

	The student requires many repetitions to learn something new.
	Compensates by memorizing stories or words but cannot keep up as demands increase
	Strength in thinking skills: conceptualization, reason, imagination, abstraction
	Strength in areas not dependent on reading, such as math, computers, and visual arts, or excellence in more conceptual
<b>Social/Emotional/Behavioral</b>	
	Shows frustration and anxiety, as he realizes he is lagging behind his peers
	Exhibits health or behavior problems, emotional difficulties or wants to avoid school
	Avoids reading aloud
<b>Attention</b>	
	Difficulty attending to tasks involving print
	Difficulty organizing time and materials
	Is easily distracted
	Does many things too quickly
	Is often overactive or fidgety
	Is inconsistent with production of classwork and homework on written assignments
<b>Student's Academic Development</b>	
	English is a second language
	The student was retained in _____ grade.
	RTI Tier II
	RTI Tier III
	Special Ed
	Speech
	OT/PT
	504
<b>Suggested Work Samples to Include</b>	
	DSA, LN, WW, SJ, DC
	Unedited writing sample
	Most recent progress report or report card

	Lexia Student Report
	STAR Reading Report
	Dibels ORF
	RAN Results

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Adapted from the Teacher Questionnaire for Dyslexia, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children

## Parental Consent for Characteristics of Dyslexia Screening

To the parents/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_,

Per Arkansas Act 1268, we are required to screen any students in grades K-12 who have struggling markers of dyslexia. You are receiving this letter because our Initial and Level 1 screening indicated that your student may have characteristics of dyslexia. These characteristics include difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities typically resulting from a deficit in the phonological component of language. This does **NOT** mean that your student has dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia. It only indicates that our initial screening showed indicators that we should further screen for verification.

The screeners will guide decisions concerning educational instruction. Appropriate interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia are systematic, multi-sensory and research-based. The interventions will provide a systematic, sequential, and cumulative program that follows a logical plan of presenting the alphabetic principle targeting the specific needs of the student administered by a dyslexia interventionist.

You also may choose to have an independent comprehensive dyslexia evaluation. If you choose to do this, you will be responsible for selecting the qualified individual to perform the comprehensive dyslexia evaluation and must cover the cost. The school district committee shall consider the diagnosis and provide the student with interventions determined to be appropriate by the school district. (A.C.A. 6-41-604). The evaluation must be conducted by a Licensed Psychological Examiner, School Psychology Specialist, Licensed Speech Language Pathologist, Certified Dyslexia Testing Specialist, or Dyslexia Therapist.

When the screeners are finished, you will receive a notice of the findings. Please sign the bottom portion of this page in the appropriate places and return to your child's school.

We appreciate your support and we strive to build a community of skilled readers. If you have any questions regarding the screening process, please feel free to email or call me julie.douglas@hssd.k12.ar.us or 501-362-8155.

Sincerely,

Julie Douglas  
District Dyslexia Coordinator  
Heber Springs School District

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **I give my permission to conduct a characteristics of dyslexia screener of my child.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I refuse to give my permission to conduct a characteristics of dyslexia screener of my child.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Characteristics Profile for Dyslexia  
Level II Screener  
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test III**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Woodcock Reading Mastery Test III</b>		
	Percentile Rank	Grade Equivalent
Phonological Awareness		
Rapid Automatic Naming		
Letter Identification		
Word Attack (Decoding)		
Word Identification		
Oral Reading Fluency		
Passage Comprehension		

<b>Test of Written Spelling - 5th Edition</b>		
	Score	Benchmark
TWS-5		

The Level II Screeners indicate this student **DOES/DOES NOT** exhibit characteristics of dyslexia which includes difficulty reading real words in isolation, difficulty in accurately decoding nonsense words, lack of reading fluency, difficulty in written spelling, and difficulty in phonological processing. Because this student has reflected one or more of the primary characteristics of dyslexia in the area of reading, the student has been recommended to the Phonics First, Tier III level of instruction at Heber Springs Public School.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Douglas, Dyslexia Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Heber Springs Public School District  
Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program  
Permission for Placement**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents of \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child has been selected to participate in the Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program at Heber Springs Public Schools using the Phonics First Program. This program is designed to improve phonics and reading skills. This program places your child in a one-on-one or small group instructional setting. The focus of the program is phonemic awareness and reading skills that will help your child become a better reader. Children who experience difficulty with reading and spelling need a solid phonics approach that is systematic, structured, sequential, cumulative, and success oriented. Attached to this letter are some accommodations to be considered for a student exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia. We will conduct ongoing assessments to monitor what your child has mastered. Most importantly, your child will acquire concepts that will be beneficial to them in the classroom.

Please check the appropriate spaces, sign the form, and return to your child's school as soon as possible.

\_\_\_ I wish to have my child participate in the Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program.

\_\_\_ I do not wish to have my child participate in the Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Interventionist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

We appreciate your support of the program as we strive to build a community of skilled readers. If you have any questions concerning the program, please feel free to email or call me at [julie.douglas@hssd.k12.ar.us](mailto:julie.douglas@hssd.k12.ar.us) or (501) 362-8155.

Sincerely,

Julie Douglas  
District Dyslexia Coordinator  
Heber Springs School District

## **Accommodations for Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia**

Listed below are some accommodations to be considered for a student exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia. Specific accommodations should be selected based on individual student needs.

### Reading

- Allow audio books and/or text-to-speech software
- Utilize outlines, summaries
- Preview questions and vocabulary
- Allow shared reading or buddy reading

### Writing

- Grade for content rather than spelling
- Allow students to dictate work to an adult
- Substitute alternative projects for written reports
- Utilize speech-to-text software
- Reduce written work
- Minimize copying
- Accept oral responses, reports, and presentations

### Testing

- Provide extra time
- Review directions orally
- Read tests orally
- Allow dictated responses

### Homework

- Reduce reading and writing requirements
- Limit time spent on homework
- Provide extra time

### Instruction

- Break tasks into small steps
- Give directions in small steps
- Give examples and model behavior
- Emphasize daily review
- Provide copies of lecture notes

### Classroom

- Post schedules and maintain routines
- Chart assignments on a calendar
- Incorporate multi-sensory activities
- Coordinate preferential seating
- Avoid requiring student to read aloud in front of a group

Source: Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide, January, 2016

**Heber Springs Public School District  
Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program  
Consent to Exit**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent or Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,

The Heber Springs School District's Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program is recommending your child for exit. The considerations for the exiting of the program includes: the reevaluation and post-testing of your student that shows growth to be closer to grade level proficiency standards. The student demonstrates self-monitoring/self-correction behaviors as evidenced through informal observation by teacher and interventionist. Students that exit the Heber Springs School District's Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program will receive regular monitoring. At anytime during monitoring, grade level proficiency is not being met, the student may be reconsidered for placement into the program.

Please check the YES boxes only if you agree that the statements are correct. If the statements are not correct, check the NO boxes. When you have finished, please sign and date.

YES  NO - I have been notified that my child has shown appropriate progress in reading and/or writing in the Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program.

YES  NO - I do give my permission for child to be exited from the Characteristics of Dyslexia Instructional Program to the regular classroom reading program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Interventionist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Dyslexia Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date