

Information for Your Doctor

What is Dyslexia?

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.” (Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, Nov. 12, 2002. This definition is also used by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NICHD)

How Common is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia affects 15-20% of the population. It affects boys and girls equally. It is seen in all races and across all socioeconomic status. (Noted from <https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics/>)

Risk Factors:

- Family history
- Prematurity
- ADHD
- Hearing issues
- Developmental delay
- Language or speech problems

Early Warning Signs:

- Preschool: not being able to rhyme, confusing words that sound similar, trouble recognizing letters of the alphabet
- Early Elementary: difficulty learning sounds that go with letters, difficulty blending letters, difficulty spelling, difficulty remembering sequences such as the days of the week, frustration with reading or writing tasks, memorizing books instead of actually reading them
- Later Elementary: Poor spelling and continued frustration with reading

Diagnosis:

Can be diagnosed as early as kindergarten. Rule out other causes of problems such as hearing and vision issues. Ask about sleep which can exacerbate learning or attention issues. Is it adequate? Is it efficient? Age-appropriate educational tests by a qualified professional.

Comorbidities:

- Dyscalculia - A disorder with math
- Dysgraphia - A disorder with handwriting
- ADHD

Prognosis?

People do not outgrow dyslexia. However, early intervention with Structured Literacy, an explicit, systematic, sequential and multi-modal reading approach, can help with remediation. Students with dyslexia will also need accommodations like more time, access to audiobooks, and assistive technology. Parents and teachers should also recognize and celebrate these students’ strengths instead of focusing only on their weaknesses. Everyone is different but some strengths may be shown in athletics, abstract thinking, creativity, or visual spatial reasoning. The important thing is to reinforce strengths as well as boost weaknesses. Reminder that dyslexia exists in males and females equally, it is not associated with low IQs, and often Gifted and Talented children with dyslexia are diagnosed later due to being able to compensate for their weaknesses until reading demands increase significantly.

Non-proven treatments:

- Vision therapy has not been shown to be effective
- No known improvement with dietary changes or supplements

Resources:

International Dyslexia Association (IDA): <https://dyslexiaida.org>
 Local IDA branch: <https://or.dyslexiaida.org/>



Parent Checklist:

Consider the following list and remember to write down what your concerns are before the appointment as often you will forget if you don't have them in front of you.

These will help your doctor rule out/in medical issues that may be causing or contributing to issues in school.

- ✓ Family history – anyone in the family with learning problems, hearing problems, or developmental delay? For each biological parent:
 - How much difficulty did you have learning to read in elementary school?
 - Did you have difficulty learning letter sounds and names and/or color names when you were a child?
 - In comparison to others in your classes, how much did you struggle to complete your work?
- ✓ Prematurity or problems when your child was born
- ✓ Problems or exposures during pregnancy, including alcohol or drugs
- ✓ Any known neurological problems, including ADHD, depression, anxiety, or developmental delays, including speech/language
- ✓ Any chronic health problems
- ✓ Any causes for repeated school absences
- ✓ Any testing that has been done (eye doctor, hearing, school testing)
- ✓ Any notes from the teachers explaining concerns
- ✓ How is your child's sleep? What time does your child go to sleep and wake up?

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