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dyslexia readiness x educators advancing montessori

MONTESSORI DISTANCE LEARNING EQUITY & INCLUSION GUIDELINES

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ACCESSIBILITY

Dyslexia is in every classroom. It is estimated that between 15 - 20% of people in the United States will have symptoms of dyslexia.¹

Now that most of the learning happening in elementary classrooms has shifted towards online platforms, we want to help teachers and parents create equitable and inclusive environments for students.

In this guide we provide you with resources and suggestions that can help you support all students. We are including a great deal of information. Not everything may be applicable to you or necessary right now, however, we encourage you to read through and implement it as comprehensively as possible, always keeping Montessori best practices in mind.

Even neurotypical students will learn differently during distance learning. Accommodations such as the ones provided in this guide can benefit everyone in class.

We know that Montessori classrooms strive to be welcoming learning environments. Every child receives precise guidance to help them achieve their full potential. Because the curriculum is personalized, we know that no two children are the same.

Providing accommodations for neurodiverse students is not giving them an advantage, it's only leveling the field to help them learn like everyone else.

¹ "Dyslexia Basics." Edited by IDA, International Dyslexia Association, 10 Mar. 2020, dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics/.





PARENT - CHILD LEARNING UPDATE

Student

My name is:

My strengths are:

It's hard for me to:

I want you to know:

Parent

My child's experience with distance learning last spring was:

What helps my child with academic work is:

My child has a hard time/needs help with:

My child enjoys (reading, science, singing, etc)

DOWNLOAD
THIS FORM!






ACCOMMODATIONS FOR READING & LESSONS

READING

Use audio instead of/or while reading text:

- Audiobooks
- Podcast and pre-recorded instructions (voice recorder, Audacity)
- Provide audio feedback for assignments (Kaizena)
- Text-to-Speech (Immersive Reader)
- Pen Scanner (C-Pen)

Use larger print size

- Magnifier (accessibility tools)
- Zoom in with view menu 
- Immersive Reader

Simplify the layout to have fewer items per page or line

- Larger font
- Larger space between lines
- Highlight text (or recommend the use of highlighter tape for printed materials and books)
- Include bulleted list with concise instructions

LESSONS & MEETINGS

Use complementary tools to enhance the lesson experience

- Use visual representations to support verbal material (Miro, Padlet)
- Minimize visual and auditory stimulation (white noise app, earmuffs)
- Ensure child is in a distraction free setting
- Use virtual manipulatives (Number Pieces or Geoboard (Chrome)

Provide extra resources to supplement the lesson

- Record the lesson for later review (Loom)
- Provide copies of notes before or after the lesson (Otter, Voice in Voice typing, closed captions)
- Enable captions during meetings (Google Meet)
- Have a designated "reader" or review instructions aloud
- Provide an outline of the lesson and review key topics at the end



ACCOMMODATIONS FOR WRITING AND ASSIGNMENTS

WRITING

Be flexible with the way writing is completed

- Speech to text (Google docs, accessibility tools)
- Video or audio recording (digital voice recorder, Loom)
- Dictation to an adult or classmate

Provide tools to support learning

- Online dictionary (e.g. Kids Britannica)
- Spelling and grammar checking (Grammarly)
- Encourage the exploration of different writing instruments to find the best fit for the child (e.g. gel pen, pencil, ink pen)
- Encourage the use of graphic organizers, outlines, blank charts or templates

ASSIGNMENTS

Be flexible with the way assignments are provided

- Marking answers directly on paper
- Dictating or using speech to text
- Recording a video or an audio report
- Allow the use of a math facts table
- Provide clear and concise assignment guidelines and expectations

Facilitate the use of manipulatives

- Printable adaptations of Montessori materials (e.g. stamp game)
- Suggest alternatives to dimensional materials (e.g. craft wooden cubes, decorative bead bars, cardboard bead frame)
- Suggest virtual alternatives for math practice such as Number Pieces or Geoboard (Chrome extensions)
- Suggest using digital graphic organizers (Popplet, Mindomo, Mind Meister)



FOSTERING SCHEDULING, TIMING AND ORGANIZATION

MOVEMENT

Foster concentration

- Recommend the use of sensory tools such as a wobble stool, elastic kick band for chair or silent fidgets
- Be flexible with lesson delivery and during meetings.
- Consider outdoor in-person meetings for special or long lessons
- Include full body movement options for work (e.g. skip rope for rhythmic memorization)

ORGANIZATION

Help children develop organizational skills

- Use alarms and electronic reminders for time management
- Provide visual, kinesthetic and/or oral directions whenever possible
- Check in with the students to make sure they are following along
- Clearly identify expectations (daily, per topic, for learning)
- Prioritize weekly and monthly schedules (over daily or variable ones)
- Create with the child a set of signals that can be used to privately ask for help or support

TIMING

Flexibility is key

- Provide extra time. Language processing is a complex skill
- Allow for a flexible schedule during the week, and for assignments
- Ensure extra breaks are included in the daily schedule
- Provide plenty of opportunities for students to work in a way where they feel comfortable and can thrive (alone, in pairs, or in groups)
- Break down complex tasks into manageable parts

Questions? Want to learn more?

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