

The Difference Between Dyslexia and Auditory Processing Disorder

By Kate Kelly

Some of the signs of dyslexia and auditory processing disorder look similar. Each condition can make it hard for kids to develop skills like reading, writing and rhyming. Kids can have APD and dyslexia at the same time. This table explains the differences and similarities between them.

	Dyslexia	Auditory Processing Disorder
What is it?	<p>An issue that involves difficulty with reading and processing language in ways that can also affect spelling, writing and speaking.</p> <p>Kids with dyslexia may find it hard to isolate the sounds in words, match sounds to letters or blend sounds into words.</p>	<p>A condition that makes it hard to process what the ear hears, such as recognizing subtle differences in the sounds that make up words.</p> <p>Kids with APD may find it hard to locate where a sound is coming from or to understand what someone is saying, especially in noisy environments. APD can also impact skills like spelling and reading.</p>

	Dyslexia	Auditory Processing Disorder
<p>Signs you may notice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles with reading • Has trouble sounding out written words and memorizing sight words • Has trouble with spelling, often leaving out letters, reversing letters or confusing the order of letters • Avoids reading aloud • Has trouble with rhyming • May have an easier time understanding stories he hears than stories he reads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles to follow conversations and respond to spoken questions • Asks speakers to repeat what they've said, or frequently says "Huh?" or "What?" • May be very sensitive to noise and easily distracted by background noise • Has trouble with rhyming • May have an easier time understanding stories he reads than stories he hears • May also have trouble with reading, spelling and following spoken instructions
<p>Possible social and emotional impact</p>	<p>Struggling with reading can affect kids' self-esteem. It can make them feel like they're falling short.</p> <p>Dyslexia can also make it hard to find the right word to say, which can make it hard to answer questions in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Kids with APD may retreat in social situations because they have a hard time getting the joke, following the rules in games or keeping up with conversations.</p>

	Dyslexia	Auditory Processing Disorder
Specialized instruction or technology that can help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit structured reading instruction that focuses on identifying sounds in words and understanding how those sounds are represented by letters. Programs that use an Orton–Gillingham approach help struggling readers work on decoding words and recognizing sight words and also help kids understand what the words mean. • A reading program that uses a multisensory approach, or focuses on using all the senses to learn • Audiobooks or text-to-speech software that allows kids to hear the words as they look at them on the screen • Colored reading strips to help focus on one line of text at a time • Dictation or speech-to-text software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech therapy to improve perception of individual sounds in words and develop active listening skills. (Therapy can also help kids produce sounds better and more clearly.) • FM listening devices that makes certain frequencies louder and tones down or changes others • Text-to-speech software that allows kids to hear the words as they look at them on the screen • Closed captions and speech-to-text software • Training to help with memory, attention and problem solving
Accommodations that can help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting extra time for reading and writing • Being graded based on the content of written work rather than on the spelling • Having test questions read out loud and answering them orally • Receiving spoken instructions as often as possible in case written instructions are hard to follow • Accessing the teacher’s notes to reduce the amount of note-taking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting near the teacher and away from noisy doors or windows • Having the teacher make eye contact before giving instructions and checking frequently for understanding • Having the teacher use pictures, symbols or gestures to support spoken lessons • Receiving written instructions as often as possible in case spoken instructions are hard to follow • Accessing the teacher’s notes to reduce the amount of note-taking

	Dyslexia	Auditory Processing Disorder
What you can do at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games that require your child to focus on the sounds in words by doing things like rhyming or deleting sounds in words. • Read aloud so your child hears stories above his reading level to expose him to new words and ideas. • Use text-to-speech and other built-in features on your phone or mobile device to help your child understand the connection between how words sound and how they're spelled. • Try other strategies to help your child with dyslexia at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn off the radio or TV when talking to your child. • Have your child do homework in a quiet place with few distractions. • Make eye contact before giving instructions. • Give instructions one at a time since multi-step directions can be harder to process and remember. • Use closed captions to help your child follow the dialogue on TV shows or movies.

Keep in mind that dyslexia and APD can occur at the same time. APD can also look a lot like ADHD. Many professionals may be involved in evaluating your child, but only a trained audiologist can conduct the tests needed to diagnose APD. Read about treatment options for APD. And learn what you can do if your child has been identified with dyslexia.

About the Author



Kate Kelly has been writing and editing for more than 20 years, with a focus on parenting.

Reviewed by



Guinevere Eden, PhD, is a professor at Georgetown University and director of its Center for the Study of Learning.

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**Mon Jul 15 at
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Making Math Fun

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MAT

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32 Laight Street, 1st Floor
New York, NY 10013-2152
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