

What Every Parent Should Know About Dyslexia

The following information was adapted from The International Dyslexia Association (IDA). IDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of dyslexia. IDA has been serving individuals with dyslexia, their families, and professionals in the field for more than 50 years.

Let's meet Adam, a typical child with dyslexia.



Adam has trouble in school—with reading, spelling, and occasionally math. Sometimes he has trouble saying what he means and understanding what his parents and friends say to him.

Before he started school, he was a very happy child. He was good in sports and had many friends. However, it all changed when he started first grade. He learned quickly to hate school, and often said he had a stomachache.

He didn't learn to read as fast or as well as his classmates. When his teacher called on him, he couldn't get the words out—even when he knew the right answer. The teacher got impatient, and accused him of not trying. He began to feel frustrated and anxious. Because he was afraid of losing his friends, Adam became the class clown. It was a lot better to make friends laugh with you than to have them laugh at you.

Adam's teacher said he was a problem, but Adam was not a problem child; he is a child with a problem. Too often, we think that people like Adam are lazy, uncaring, and maybe even dumb. Our misunderstanding makes these people lose confidence in themselves and in their abilities.

Dyslexia- The Facts

When a person has dyslexia they have difficulty with language. People with dyslexia often struggle with reading, spelling, understanding language they hear, or expressing themselves clearly when speaking or writing. Both oral and written language are affected. Of students with learning disabilities who receive special education services, 70 to 80 percent have problems with reading. Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties.

People with dyslexia and other learning disabilities are as smart or smarter than other people, they simply learn in a different way.

Reading disabilities are the most understood and effectively corrected learning disability. If children who are dyslexic get effective instruction early and intensively in kindergarten, first and second grades they can make significant gains in learning to read at grade level. If help is delayed until third grade they will rarely catch up with their peers—75 percent of the children who were poor readers in the 3rd grade remained poor readers in the 9th grade and could not read well when they became adults.

If parents suspect that their child has dyslexia, the sooner they act on their suspicions, the better it will be for their child. Parents should familiarize themselves with the warning signs and talk with a child's teacher if a problem is suspected. For more information on learning disabilities, parents can visit www.aboutld.org, or call 888-GR8-MIND to receive a free brochure.

WARNING SIGNS



The following difficulties may be associated with dyslexia if they are unexpected for the individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities. To verify that an individual is dyslexic, he/she should be tested by a qualified testing examiner.

PRE-SCHOOL

- May talk later than most children
- May have difficulty pronouncing words, i.e., *busgetti* for *spaghetti*, *mawn lower* for *lawn mower*
- May be slow to add new vocabulary words
- May be unable to recall the right word
- May have difficulty with rhyming
- May have trouble learning the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, colors, shapes, how to spell and write his or her name
- May have trouble interacting with peers
- May be unable to follow multi-step directions or routines
- Fine motor skills may develop more slowly than in other children
- May have difficulty telling and/or retelling a story in the correct sequence
- Often has difficulty separating sounds in words and blending sounds to make words

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 4TH GRADES


- Has difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- May be slow to learn the connection between letters and sounds
- May confuse small words - *at* - *to*, *said* - *and*, *does* - *goes*
- Makes consistent reading and spelling errors including:
 - Letter reversals - *d* for *b* as in, *dog* for *bog*
 - Word reversals - *tip* for *pit*
 - Inversions - *m* and *w*, *u* and *n*
 - Transpositions - *felt* and *left*
 - Substitutions - *house* and *home*

- May transpose number sequences and confuse arithmetic signs (+ - x / =)
- May have trouble remembering facts
- May be slow to learn new skills; relies heavily on memorizing without understanding
- May be impulsive and prone to accidents
- May have difficulty planning
- Often uses an awkward pencil grip (fist, thumb hooked over fingers, etc.)
- May have trouble learning to tell time
- May have poor fine motor coordination

5TH THROUGH 8TH GRADE

- Is usually reading below grade level
- May reverse letter sequences - *soiled* for *solid*, *left* for *felt*
- May be slow to discern and to learn prefixes, suffixes, root words, and other reading and spelling strategies
- May have difficulty spelling, spells same word differently on the same page
- May avoid reading aloud
- May have trouble with word problems in math
- May write with difficulty with illegible handwriting; pencil grip is awkward, fist-like or tight
- May avoid writing
- May have slow or poor recall of facts
- May have difficulty with comprehension
- May have difficulty making friends
- May not understand body language and facial expressions of others
- May have trouble with non-literal language (idioms, jokes, proverbs, slang)
- May forget to hand in homework or to bring in homework
- May have difficulty with planning and time management





The proper team has assembled, the student's photo is prominently placed, the calming herbal tea has been served, the tape recorder is on and the newsprint is on the easel. It is time to begin....

...DEVELOPING THE IEP

