

# DYSLEXIA FACT SHEET

*Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, each school district will screen students in Grades K-2 for weaknesses in literacy skill development that may be associated with dyslexia.*

## What is Dyslexia?

### *Dyslexia is:*

- A difference in the brain that makes processing speech sounds difficult, specifically the ability to hear, substitute, and change individual sounds in words.
- Characterized by challenges with reading and spelling, particularly with the connections between letters and sounds.
- Likely to lead to problems learning and remembering vocabulary, understanding what is read, and getting thoughts on paper.
- Not related overall intelligence.
- Not a visual problem or caused by a lack of motivation, interest, exposure to rich literature, or ineffective classroom instruction.



**VIDEO: What is Dyslexia/Dyslexia Explained by Margie Gillis with Understood.org**

## Focus on Strengths

All children, including those with dyslexia, have strengths, and we can use those strengths to advance their learning. Children with dyslexia have talents & interests and should be encouraged. Children with dyslexia may have strong verbal and thinking skills, such as:

- Creative, outside-of-the box problem-solving skills.
- Listening skills.
- Imagination and curiosity.
- Skills recognizing patterns.
- Building, assembling, and working with objects.
- Athletic, artistic, or musical skills.



## What Helps?

**With appropriate instruction and supports, a child with dyslexia can learn to read and write. Beneficial instruction is clear and aligned with evidence-based practices.**



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## Common Struggles

### *Each Child is Different*

Dyslexia looks different for each child and across ages and stages. It is common for people with dyslexia to struggle pronouncing words with two or more syllables, as well as:

#### Pre-School through Kindergarten

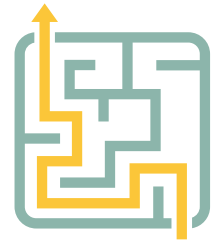
- Delayed speech (age 2-3)
- Following directions
- Learning & remembering letter names
- Rhyming

#### Later School Years

- Reading aloud
- Reading and writing words with two or more syllables
- Keeping up with large amounts of reading and writing
- Writing tasks (assignments, essays, emails, taking notes, etc.)
- Learning a foreign language

#### Early School Years

- Connecting letters to sounds
- Getting thoughts on paper
- Following multi-step directions
- Memorizing math facts and solving word problems
- Slow or choppy reading, even with very small or common words
- Leaving out words, parts of words, and sounds when reading
- Poor and inconsistent spelling
- Mixing up terms for concepts and objects (i.e. bagel/doughnut)
- Avoidance behaviors



## Connecting with Schools

A family/school partnership is essential for student success. The first step when you are concerned about your child's progress is to make an appointment to talk to the teacher to discuss:

- Your concerns and questions.
- The teacher's concerns and questions.
- Steps to learn more about your child's struggles and needs.
- Plan a follow-up meeting to share findings & discuss connecting instruction to your child's needs.



## Classroom Supports

### *Accommodations Create Access*

In addition to appropriate instruction, accommodations help children with dyslexia in the classroom and increase their independence. Some supports that students find helpful include:

- Extended time for reading and writing.
- Breaking up long assignments.
- Quiet place for studying and testing.
- Audio books (including for textbooks) or computer support for reading (i.e. Bookshare or Learning Ally).
- Computers with dictation software.
- Closed captions when watching videos to reinforce word knowledge.
- See [ORBIDA](#) for more information.



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## Social Emotional Support

### *Build on Strengths & Advocacy Skills*

Children with dyslexia may also struggle with self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. You can foster positive attitudes and resiliency by:

- Discovering and encouraging your child's strengths, interests, and passions.
- Pursuing hands-on learning opportunities about your community and world.
- Reading to and with your children, watching videos, and listening to texts on current classroom topics.
- Focusing on your child's progress and success.
- Teaching your child that everyone has strengths and struggles.
- How to ask for help and talk about their needs (self-advocacy).



## Resources

- OSPI Dyslexia Site & Resource Guide
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Washington Branch of IDA
- Spanish information on dyslexia
- National Center for Improving Literacy
- Understood
- University of Michigan Dyslexia Help
- Watch this one with your kids! See Dyslexia Differently

