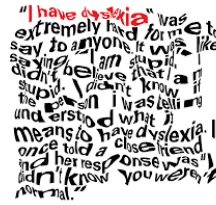
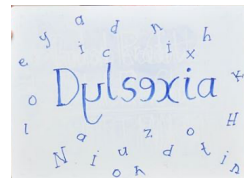


# Dyslexia: A Comprehensive Guide for Parents

## Is it this what dyslexia looks like?



## How about this one?



**There are many misconceptions surrounding dyslexia. Let's look at the most common ones.**

Many children are misdiagnosed when it comes to dyslexia. Teachers, administrators and specialists sometimes struggle with what dyslexia actually is, how to diagnosis it and then remediate effectively. Sometimes children who are having difficulty reading are diagnosed with an eye issue (such as tracking). Other times, children are not diagnosed at all due to parents and teachers not having enough information on how to identify dyslexia. This misdiagnosis can interfere during a critical time in a child's reading development and can delay intervention or prevent intervention altogether. The other problem is the misunderstanding of the word dyslexia. Sometimes educators use the word dyslexia, but the issue is really reading fluency or reading comprehension. This misdiagnosis can lead to confusion on part of the parent and/or incorrect remediation techniques. Another confusing aspect of dyslexia is that many professionals across the country do not use the word dyslexia. This causes even more confusion with parents who are trying to get services at school for their child.

This brief is intended to provide a clarification of the many misconceptions surrounding dyslexia, an accurate and specific definition of what dyslexia is, a scientific view of the reading disorder, a perspective from the law, strengths and weakness of dyslexics, what a dyslexia screener should look like, parent guidelines and resources for technology.

**1. Most students with dyslexia are male**

False! The research reports that is it about 50% to 50% males to females

**2. Dyslexia is a visual problem**

False! Dyslexia is a phonological processing difficulty and does not have anything to do with vision. Please be wary of eye doctors that prescribe a “cure” for dyslexia with visual therapy

**3. Dyslexia runs in families**

True! There is a definite genetic component to dyslexia

**4. The main difficulty with dyslexia is reversals**

False! Reversals are common in young children and only a small percentage of dyslexia reverse their letters and/or numbers

**5. In order to receive services, a child must have a doctor diagnose dyslexia**

False! The definition of dyslexia is in the federal code under the Learning Disability category

A student who has markers of dyslexia is struggling with reading and writing but has adequate intelligence and received the same classroom instruction that benefits most children.

**Please watch this informative video on You Tube:**

Please watch this informative video about Dyslexia:  
**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM>**

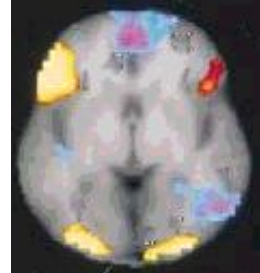
## What does the science say?

These are brain scans of two people, one with dyslexia and one without.

**Non-Dyslexic**



**Dyslexic**



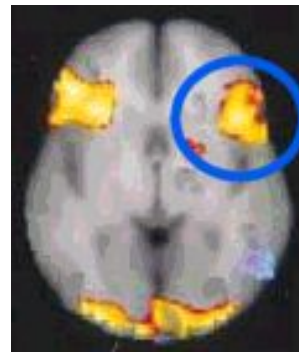
The area in the yellow circle is the part of the brain that lights up in a MRI when a person is reading. Notice that in the person with dyslexia, that part of the brain is not lighting up at all.

Now let's look two brain scans of the same non dyslexic person and a dyslexic who has had remediation

**Non Dyslexic**



**Dyslexic with remediation**



As you can see, a different part of the brain has lit up, confirming the theory that when a dyslexic is given intensive remediation, their brain actually re-wires itself to learn how to read. This MRI method is in the early stages of being developed to help diagnosis dyslexia.

To learn more, visit the Gab Lab at this link: [http://babymri.org/Site/Our\\_Study.html](http://babymri.org/Site/Our_Study.html)

## What does the law say?

The US department of Education Office of Special Education sent out a letter written October 2015. This letter clarified that dyslexia is under the definition of a learning disability and that schools must evaluate to see if the child would qualify as a student with a disability. The federal definition of a learning disability is: "Specific learning disability corresponds to perceptually impaired and means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, **dyslexia**, and developmental aphasia".



## What is the public policy on dyslexia?

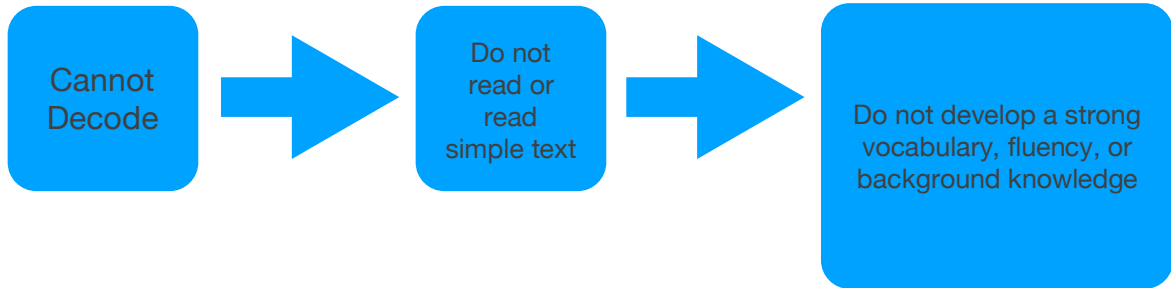
In 2013, only 22 states had dyslexia laws but as of 2023, 49 states have some type of dyslexia law on the books. States are now working on dyslexia handbooks for their teachers.

## What do dyslexic students struggle with?

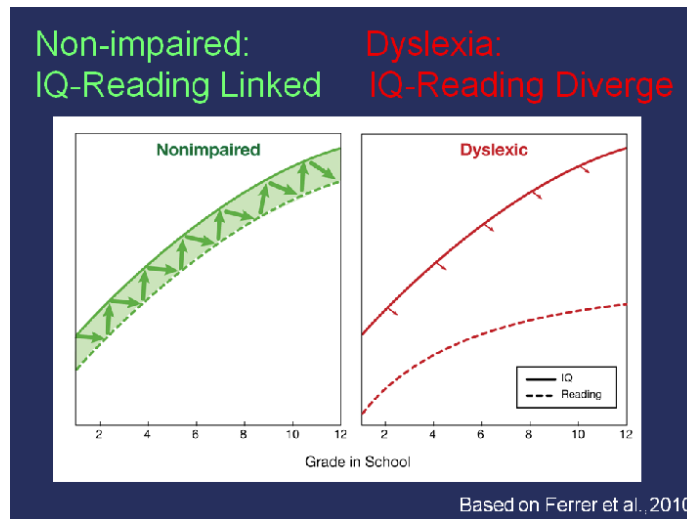
- Phonemic-awareness, manipulation and memory - (say split without the /p/)
- Word decoding - Word attack skills
- Reading fluency - how quickly words can be read
- Reading comprehension - can the child understand and remember what is read
- Spelling
- Automaticity - How quickly can they do things?
- Listening comprehension - Can they listen to a story and remember details?
- Written expression - Are they writing like they are speaking?
- Difficulty reading single words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding nonsense or unfamiliar words
- Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading (lack of reading fluency)
- Avoidance or limited amount of time spend reading
- Difficulty with rapid naming of familiar objects, colors or letters
- Students who have poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or related areas of writing and spelling that is unexpected for a student's age and grade

## Why is this such an important topic?

“The consequences of a slow start in reading become monumental as they accumulate exponentially over time.”  
(Torgesen, American Educator, 1998)



**“It takes 4 times as long to intervene in fourth grade as it does in late kindergarten.” – NICHD**



**Remediation in Kindergarten takes 30 minutes**  
**The same remediation in 4th grade takes 120 minutes**

## What can a parent do?

### For your child at home...

- Talk to your child about learning difficulties, acknowledging that school is HARD
- Talk about dyslexia (issues and strengths)
- Talk about who they can express themselves to regarding their concerns
- Talk about how they can advocate for themselves
- Talk about the need to share their unique learning strategies (what works for them?)

### For your child at school...

Advocate for your child

- Is your child being screened?
- What are the results of that screening?
- What type of program is being used for remediation?
- What type of progress is he/she making?
- If your child is not making progress, what other types of remediation has been recommended?

## What are some technology resources?

- Learning Ally: Books read aloud - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpJ3jF5Q9oQ>
- Bookshare: Books read aloud - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Cv1D-pLFjE>
- Top Assistive Technology Tools For Dyslexia And Dysgraphia: <https://www.ldrfa.org/top-assistive-technology-tools-for-dyslexia-and-dysgraphia/>
- Google for dyslexia Chromebook extensions for dyslexia: <https://www.noodle.com/articles/7-google-chrome-extensions-that-help-students-withdyslexia>
- Dragon Dictation for speech to text: <https://www.nuance.com/dragon.html>

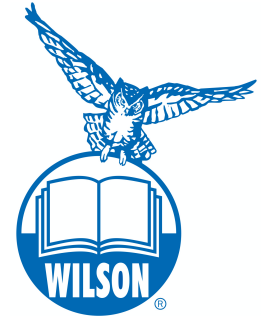
## What are some dyslexia resources for parents?

- Wrightslaw provides information on the dyslexia:  
<https://www.wrightslaw.com/blog/tag/dyslexia/>
- The International Dyslexia Association offers a comprehensive list of resources for dyslexia at:  
<https://dyslexiaida.org/structuredliteracy/>
- The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity offers support at:  
<http://dyslexia.yale.edu/Technology.html>
- The Dyslexia Handbook: What Every Parent Should Know:  
<https://app.box.com/s/8ucxzz2u5wq2wezqoaqgrltn532z97bz>
- Advocacy group for parents
  - <http://decodingdyslexianj.org/>
- Associations for dyslexia
  - The International Dyslexia Association: <http://dyslexiaida.org/>
- Sample Fact Sheets from the IDA: (found at <https://dyslexiada.org/fact-sheets/>)



## What are some Literacy Programs for students with dyslexia?

Ask your school about the following programs that are specifically designed for dyslexic students...



ORTON-GILLINGHAM  
multisensory reading



## References:

<https://www.eschoolnews.com/2017/12/14/dyslexia-awareness-quiz/>

Hoefl, F., McCandliss, B. D., Black, J. M., Gantman, A., Zakerani, N., Hulme, C., ... & Gabrieli, J. D. (2011). Neural systems predicting long-term outcome in dyslexia. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *108*(1), 361-366.

<http://www.thegaablab.com/index.html>

Solari, E.J., Terry, N.P., Gaab, N., Hogan, T.P., Nelson, N.J., Pentimonti, J.M., Petscher, Y., & Sayko, S. (2020). Translational Science: A Road Map for the Science of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*.

<https://learningtools.donjohnston.com/2019/08/3-rock-solid-tools-for-dyslexic-students/>

Youman, M., Mather, N. Dyslexia laws in the USA. *Ann. of Dyslexia* 63, 133–153 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2>

Torgensen, J. K., & Burgess, S. R. (1998). Consistency of reading-related processes throughout early childhood: Evidence from longitudinal-correlational and instructional studies. *Word recognition in beginning reading*, 268-292.

Ferrer, E., Shaywitz, B. A., Holahan, J. M., Marchione, K., & Shaywitz, S. E. (2010). Uncoupling of reading and IQ over time: Empirical evidence for a definition of dyslexia. *Psychological science*, *21*(1), 93-101.