

# Dyslexia

## *Quick Reference Material*

Dyslexia is the most common learning disability that affects students, and one of the most misunderstood learning disabilities. Dyslexia is an inability to get information from print characterized by difficulty in single word decoding caused by insufficient phonological processing skills. These problems are not manifested by a lack of cognitive skills or sensory impairment. Most people with dyslexia have an average cognitive ability.

### **Facts about Dyslexia**

- Dyslexia is difficulty with language. Usually people with dyslexia have trouble with reading, spelling, understanding language, or clearly communicating with the spoken or written word.
- People are born with Dyslexia. It usually runs in families, and is thought to be hereditary.
- Each person with dyslexia has a unique disability. No two are identical. Some may have trouble with left to right, and others may have trouble with direction.
- Dyslexia does not mean that a person will be unsuccessful. Many famous, successful people have dyslexia.
- Many people with dyslexia are talented in other areas such as art, drama or sports despite their difficulty with language or organization.

### **Symptoms**

- Confusion over the direction of letters.
- Difficulty with the concept of left to right.
- Problems with organization.
- Language development was delayed as a young child.
- Difficulty with directions.
- Leave out words when reading.

## **Myths about Dyslexia**

- If a child writes letters backwards, he must be dyslexic.
- Dyslexia is a visual problem.
- Children outgrow dyslexia.
- Children with dyslexia see things backwards.
- Dyslexia is more prominent in boys than girls.
- If a child does not write words or letters backwards he doesn't have dyslexia.
- The way to help a child with dyslexia learn to read is to force him to read 30 minutes a day.
- Intelligence and reading difficulties have a high correlation.
- It is best not to label young children as having dyslexia.

## **Teaching Strategies for Students with Dyslexia**

- Give students direct, explicit instruction in the alphabetic code and in segmenting and blending speech sounds.
- Adjust reading level.
- Teach students to process larger chunks (morphemes) of words.
- Make phoneme instruction more concrete. Let students use manipulatives to represent phonemes while teaching them phonemic skills.
- Give students a graphic organizer.
- Teach students metacognitive skills while teaching reading.
- Teach reading using texts that have a high rate of decodable text. Trying to teach reading to students with texts that have a high ratio of irregular words only frustrates the student with dyslexia.
- Provide instructions both orally and in written form.
- Teach for automaticity. As students improve their decoding skills, provide exposure to sight words. As students sight word vocabulary increases, expose students to more irregular words.
- Make use of peer tutors.

- When teaching comprehension introduce important vocabulary before reading the text. Teach students the main comprehension components of stories such as characters and setting.
- Frequently remind students of due dates.
- Instead of teaching spelling and reading as separate, isolated subjects teach students the relationship between spelling and reading.
- Provide students with organizational strategies such as timelines, charts, notes and outlines.

**Resources:**

Adams, M. J. (1990). Beginning reading instruction in the United States. ERIC Digest. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. ED321250.

Website: [www.dyslexia-teacher.com](http://www.dyslexia-teacher.com)