



What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Also known as a reading disability, dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language.¹ Dyslexia affects 20 percent of the population and represents 80-90% of all those with learning disabilities.² Dyslexia can only be diagnosed by a doctor, but can be treated in many ways.

<https://www.mavoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/symptoms-causes/svc-20353552>

<http://dyslexia.vale.edu/dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia/>

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DYSLEXIA

Characteristics of dyslexia are evident at different times of development. Although there is no cure for dyslexia, early identification and intervention greatly affect the outcome.

Before a child begins school they may display early signs of dyslexia. Signs may include, but are not limited to:

- Late speech language development;
- Trouble remembering colors, letters, and numbers; and
- Difficulty reciting nursery rhymes.

Signs of dyslexia may be more apparent in school age children. Signs may include, but are not limited to:

- Reading far below grade level;
- Trouble recognizing the difference between letters that look similar (e.g., d and b, p and q); and
- Difficulty sounding out words.

Signs of dyslexia in teens and adults may include, but are not limited to:

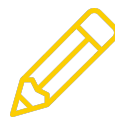
- Reading far below grade level or age average;
- Inability to read fluently; and
- Deficiencies in comprehension and/or memorization.



TREATMENT



Early diagnosis of dyslexia leads to earlier intervention and support for students.



The use of multisensory techniques can help improve reading skills.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWBjBq73oR4>



Early reading support may lead to higher rates of reading and writing success.



Learn what accommodations and modifications your student needs to access their learning.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIA AT SCHOOL

1. Indiana Code 20-35.5 requires all Indiana schools to screen students in grades K-2 for learning characteristics related to dyslexia.
2. Schools must provide students with programming that is systematic, sequential, increases in difficulty over time, and does not assume students have mastered previously taught information. Interventions must be research-based and include the five components of the Science of Reading:
 - Phonemic awareness (e.g., rhyming, blending, counting syllables);
 - Graphophonemic knowledge (e.g., letter-sound relationship);
 - Structure of the English language (e.g., the five main components of language);
 - Reading and writing instruction directed towards proficiency and fluency (e.g., is student-centered and builds upon what students need, already know, and can do); and
 - Strategies for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (e.g., applying sound-symbol recognition when reading).
3. Parents may request that schools provide an evaluation to test for a learning disability if they are concerned about their student's screening results.

RESOURCES

The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity is one of the leading universities spearheading dyslexia research and advocacy. Access this resource [here](#).

Headstrong Nation provides videos, symposiums, and resources for adults and parents of dyslexics. Access this resource [here](#).

With early identification and proper intervention, students with dyslexia can learn to read, write, and achieve academic success.

Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities helps parents design a roadmap to guide their students academic success. The site also gives resources to improve online learning due to COVID-19. Access this resource [here](#).

The International Dyslexia Association supplies support for teachers, parents, and people with characteristics of dyslexia. Access this resource [here](#).

Undiagnosed and untreated dyslexia can cause lifelong effects. There are numerous free resources, encouragement groups, and books to help support students exhibiting learning characteristics related to dyslexia.



Learning Characteristics Related to Dyslexia Frequently Asked Questions

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has created this resource to outline common questions regarding learning characteristics related to dyslexia and answers based on Indiana Code 20-35.5 Level 1 dyslexia diagnostic and intervention process.

| Number | Question | Answer |
|--------|--|--|
| 1 | What is dyslexia? | Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. ¹ |
| 2 | How do people develop dyslexia? | The causes for dyslexia are neurobiological and genetic. |
| 3 | Can individuals diagnosed with dyslexia learn to read? | Yes, with appropriate help and interventions, individuals that display learning characteristics related to dyslexia can achieve literacy success. Early diagnosis and targeted academic interventions can assist students with reading ability. |
| 4 | What are some signs of dyslexia? | Some signs of dyslexia include, but are not limited to: difficulty spelling, identifying letters and sounds, producing rhyming words, deciphering between similar letters, and memorization. |
| 5 | Who can diagnose dyslexia? | While only a licensed medical professional can diagnose individuals with dyslexia, a medical diagnosis is not required to determine eligibility for special education and related services for students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia. It is the position of the Indiana Association of School Psychologists that school psychologists and educational teams may use diagnosis or related terminology in psychoeducational evaluation reports, including those determined and provided by school psychologists, including terms such as ADHD, depressive and/or anxiety conditions, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and/or dysgraphia. |
| 6 | What grades must receive the universal screener for dyslexia? | Indiana Code 20-35.5 requires all students in kindergarten through grade two be given a universal screener for dyslexia. Students in grade three or higher must be screened if a teacher notices they have difficulty with phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, rapid naming, and encoding. |
| 7 | How long do schools have to administer dyslexia assessments? | The universal screener and diagnostic assessments must be given in the first 90 days of school. (Weekends and breaks are included in the 90-day administration window). |
| 8 | Can dyslexia be cured? | No. Dyslexia can not be cured, but with early screening and intervention, individuals with learning characteristics related to dyslexia can have academic and post-secondary success. |

For additional information, please contact IDOE's [Office of Teaching and Learning](#).

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Overview of Senate Enrolled Act 217 for Parents and Families

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, Indiana's public and charter schools must meet added requirements to identify, as early as possible, struggling readers who show risk factors for dyslexia and then provide systematic, sequential, and multisensory instruction to meet their needs.

All students in grades kindergarten through second grade will undergo universal screener to check their skills in six different areas. These areas are: phonological and phonemic awareness (ability to separate and change sounds in words), alphabet knowledge (name different letters), sound symbol relationship (phonics), decoding (reading), rapid naming (quickly name common objects), and encoding (spelling).

Schools will notify families of the students who fall below a set score, or benchmark, on the universal screener to share the child's screener scores and seek parent permission to give another screener, a Level I Screener, which will acquire information on the student's skills and where to start the intervention.

Schools will also share information on the characteristics, interventions, and accommodations for students at risk or at some risk for the characteristics of dyslexia. Schools will also share a statement that parents may request a full educational evaluation. The Level 1 Screener is NOT a special education screener and your child taking the Level I Screener DOES NOT mean your child will be in special education. The Level I Screener will help the teacher figure out how to better help your child learn to read. A full educational evaluation is what is used to see if a child would be part of a special education program.

After the teacher gives your child a Level I Screener, the teacher and school will use the results of the screener to give your child extra lessons in their area of need. These lessons will show new and different ways of learning the skills needed to be a successful reader.

At the end of each school year, schools will give parents updates on how your child is doing. The school may also ask your permissions to give an additional screener, a Level II Screener, so they can get more information on the student's progress and continue to track the student's skills.

None of this extra help or instruction means your child is receiving special education support.

At any point during this process, parents or the school may request a full special education evaluation to see if their child may qualify with a specific learning disability that is definitive of dyslexia.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

Parent Information in English: <https://www.in.gov/doi/files/Parent-Dyslexia-Resources.pdf>