

A WORD ABOUT DYSLEXIA!



There is a lot of info out there about Dyslexia. And unfortunately a lot of that information is unclear. So this month to help you gain a better understanding of Dyslexia, the school psych department is sharing some basic info on Dyslexia.

So What Is Dyslexia?

In simple terms, Dyslexia is a significant difficulty with learning to read. Most people think dyslexia is a condition that involves reading from right to left and reversing words and letters. While some people with dyslexia do have these problems, they are not the most common or most important characteristics of dyslexia. Experts say dyslexia has little to do with recognizing the visual form of words; rather, the brains of people with dyslexia are wired differently. This difference makes it difficult to break the letters of written words into the distinct sounds (or phonemes) of their language, a capability called phonological awareness.



Developmental Dyslexia is the main form or original form of Dyslexia. This is also sometimes called *Primary Dyslexia, Phonologically based Dyslexia, Auditory Dyslexia or Dysphonetic Dyslexia.*

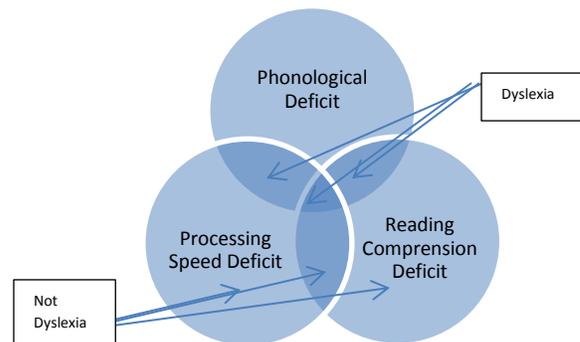
This type of Dyslexia involves a phonological deficit- in which a child has difficulty decoding or assembling words based on their sounds, accompanied by struggles with processing speed deficits (when a child may be slow at reading or may take an excessive amount of time to read sight words), and comprehension deficits (when a child has a poor understanding of what they just read).

All Phonologically based Dyslexics have a significant phonological deficits, regardless of whether they have a comprehension or processing speed deficit. Most dyslexics have at least two of these deficits, if not all three of them.

Additionally, in the last several years, more definitions and subtypes of dyslexia have also been identified.

Other Subtypes of Dyslexia:

There are a variety of terms related to the explanation of Dyslexia. Dyslexia is often broken down by subtypes or sensory systems impacted, etc.... These subtypes may be seen individually or as a subset of the primary form of dyslexia (Developmental Dyslexia).





Developmental Dyslexia: Is the primary form of dyslexia and is hereditary. This is also sometimes called *Primary Dyslexia*, *Phonologically based Dyslexia*, *Auditory Dyslexia* or *Dysphonetic Dyslexia*.

Acquired Dyslexia: Develops in children or adults due to such things as: Traumatic Brain Injury, Accidents or Strokes.

Deep Dyslexia: Is used to explain acquired dyslexia that involves not only a struggle with sounds, but also with semantics.

Surface Dyslexia: Is used to describe a type of dyslexia characterized by difficulty with whole word recognition, spelling, and understanding words that have irregular spelling-sound correspondence. This is also often called: *Dyseidetic Dyslexia* or *Visual Dyslexia*.



Attentional Dyslexia: Is used to describe children who can identify letters correctly, but the letters seem to jump between words on the page. This migration of words on the page can often result in children reading information incorrectly. For instance the words, “kind wing”, may be read as “wind king”. This substitution isn’t caused by an inability to identify letters or convert them to sound, but results from the migration of the letters between the words. This type of dyslexia has been associated with struggles with deficits in attention, visual processing and sensory motor integration skills. This type of dyslexia may also be called: *Dyseidetic* or *Dysgraphia* depending upon what underlying processing deficit is most at fault.



Directional Dyslexia: Is used to distinguish the tendency towards left-right confusion, or the tendency to become disoriented or lost. This term is also used to mean confusion with letters such as p, b, d, q where there is confusion over the “direction” of the letter. This can also be known as *Spatial Dyslexia* or *Geographical Dyslexia*. Generally this is not considered to be form of dyslexia on it’s own. Rather it is a symptom or an additional problem seen with some of the other forms of dyslexia such as: *Dyseidetic*, *Dysphonetic* or *Dysgraphia*.

Math Dyslexia: Is really not a true type of dyslexia. However, this term is often used in relation to Dyslexia. This is a lifelong learning disability involving math. It affects the student’s ability to learn and understand math. This is also commonly called: *Dyscalculia*. As with Dyslexia, people with Dyscalculia often also have additional struggles with processing speed and with comprehension.



Testing for Dyslexia.

Testing for Dyslexia can be difficult.

- 1) There is still ongoing professional argument over what does and does not constitute Dyslexia, types of Dyslexia and the way in which Dyslexia often crosses boundaries with other learning deficits.
- 2) Dyslexia is often co-morbid with other deficits, such as ADHD. So more than just a test that looks at Dyslexia is often needed to identify the problem behind the child's struggle to read.
- 3) Additionally, reading problems can be caused by more than just Dyslexia.
- 4) Most states prefer to check for the underlying causes of Dyslexia such as: Phonological Awareness, Visual Processing, Auditory Cohesion, Working Memory and Processing Speed. As they feel that this gives them more thorough information than just doing basic phonological testing for dyslexia provides.
- 5) Additionally, finding a single test for "Dylsexia" is difficult as there can be multiple types of processing disorders, subtypes of dyslexia and variations of deficits. Most so called, "Dyslectic" tests only look at phonological deficits.



As you can see by all of this, Dyslexia is not an easily understood or easily identified deficit. However changes are happening.

Current changes being sought for California Ed Law and IDEA Federal Special Needs Laws:



The following changes are currently expected to take place (unless otherwise ruled on):

By the year 2017, language involving Dyslexia will be added to the federal definition of students with learning deficits. This means that Dyslexia will be a qualifying area for specialized educational services. Additionally by the 2017/18 school year, mandatory developmental dyslexia testing/ screening (phonologically based dyslexia) will be required in public school by grade 3.

Changes to Educational Psychological Testing: Since currently there are very few actual tests for dyslexia, and many of those only look at phonological testing, it is likely that while language for indicating that dyslexia was considered may be added to Ed Psych reports, the actual testing may not drastically change. As all forms of Dyslexia can be determined by providing testing that looks at the procession areas of: Auditory Processing, Phonological Processing, Visual Processing, Sensory Motor Integration, Attention, Memory Skills and Sensory Motor Skills.

Parent and Teacher Note: Things to Watch for if you suspect Dyslexia.

Preschoolers:

Delayed Language Development / Trouble with attaching correct labels to objects and symbols/ Only “hearing” a part of a command.

Grade School Children:

Trouble Decoding Reading/ Struggles with reading comprehension/ Struggles with writing and speaking/ Slow reading

Middle School Children:

Trouble with decoding and reading quickly/ Trouble with finding the right word to say/ Struggle with the ability to write and proofread work/ Struggle to pick up on social aspects of communication

High School Children:

Trouble with the ability to process language and understand humor and nonliteral language/ Can't find the right words to express their ideas/ Struggles with spatial concepts and related activities/ Struggles with foreign languages.

Remember:

If you are seeing any of these signs in your children, there could be other areas of need to consider. Is the child ADHD? Is the child on the Autism Spectrum? Is the child Emotional Disturbed or Intellectually Deficit?

Also to remember, even if your child is tested and the educational psychologist does not use specific words indicating that Dyslexia was assessed for in their report, if they are testing the processing areas of: Auditory Processing, Visual Processing, Sensory/Motor Processing, Attentional Processing, Cognitive Association, Cognitive Expression and Cognitive Conceptualization, then they have still tested for all the underlying causes of Dyslexia and their findings can still provide you with the necessary information to determine a learning deficit. In fact testing the underlying processing deficits may provide you with additional information beyond the question of Dyslexia.

