

# Characteristics of Dyslexia

## How Should I Use This Resource?

Use this resource for general age ranges and symptoms of dyslexia. Professionals and parents need to look for clusters of symptoms – not just one or two symptoms. If your child or student has three or more of the characteristics, I would encourage you to learn more about dyslexia testing and about reading interventions that work for dyslexia. If you read through these characteristics and your child only has one or two symptoms, it is likely that you don't need to be concerned about dyslexia.

## Preschool & Kindergarten

- Difficulty pronouncing words correctly (mixing up the sounds or syllables)
- Delayed language and/or vocabulary development
- Left and right confusion
- Switching handedness (late choosing a dominant hand)
- Difficulty remembering the sequence of the alphabet or days of the week
- Can't remember how to tie shoelaces
- Can't create a rhyming word or doesn't have fun with rhymes
- Difficulty quickly naming familiar things or objects
- Chronic ear infections
- Difficulty remembering how to spell their name, memorizing their address or phone number
- Coloring, pasting, and using a scissors is frustrating

## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 4th Grade

- Delayed ability to connect letters to their sounds
- Reversals (b/d) and inversions (n/u) in letters or numbers beyond the end of 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- Can't remember sight words
- Difficulty sounding out unknown words
- Poor reading fluency – reading is choppy, slow, and full of mistakes
- Poor spelling ability
- Guessing at unknown words in stories either from the shape of the words, context clues, or pictures
- Comprehension is much better when information is listened to as opposed to reading to self
- Handwriting is difficult to read (dysgraphia)
- Math trouble – confusing math symbols, not understanding time and how to tell time, memorizing math facts, directionality
- Directionality confusion with positional words (before, after, left, right)
- Says the wrong words when speaking or makes up their own words
- Complains that reading is hard or avoids reading tasks
- History of reading problems in a close relative

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Continued difficulty sounding out unknown words – especially multisyllabic words
- Oral reading fluency is weak – may leave off suffixes, omit parts of words, or skip smaller words (an, in, the) when reading out-loud
- Reading progress continues to be very slow
- Word problems are extremely difficult in math
- Difficulty recalling math facts despite years of practice
- Spelling strategies and patterns are difficult to learn
- Written expression is weak - especially punctuation, capitalization, organization (ideas and content may be fantastic)

## High School

- Reading difficulties have persisted
- Continued directionality confusion without the use of coping strategies
- Inaccurate spelling
- Poor written expression skills (verbal expression is generally much stronger than writing skills)
- Poor grades or may have to work twice as hard as peers to maintain grades
- Difficulty learning a foreign language
- Takes longer to complete work – especially reading and writing assignments
- Diminished vocabulary due to a lack of reading throughout the years
- Misunderstanding information that is read
- Summarizing is difficult
- Has to read text several times over in order to comprehend
- Doesn't read for pleasure, may become fatigued from reading
- Trouble pronouncing uncommon words such as names or locations

## Please Be Aware

The age categories and symptoms are meant to give a general idea of what to look for and when. Individual symptoms and ages can and may vary. There may be coexisting conditions. You should consult a trained professional when looking for diagnosis or screening of any kind.

## Did You Know That...

Dyslexia is hereditary. Children with a dyslexic parent have a 50% chance of being dyslexic.

Individuals with dyslexia often have superior strengths - visual spatial skills, leadership qualities, athletic ability, musical aptitude, empathy, creativity and critical thinking.

Dyslexia affects 1 in every 5 people in America - that's 20%.

Dyslexia is estimated to comprise 80% of all reading disabilities.

40% of individuals with dyslexia also have a form of ADD.

Children are usually not identified as having a reading disability until the 3rd or 4th grade. This is past an optimal age for intervention.

Children can be tested for dyslexia as early as 5 years of age.