

## What is Dyslexia?

Children with dyslexia have difficulties with the building blocks of language, including learning how speech sounds make up words, easily connecting sounds to alphabet letters, blending sounds like “s” and “h” to make the “sh” sound, and fluently recognizing reading and spelling words. These difficulties can lead to problems in reading comprehension and learning new vocabulary.

Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms which result in children having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills, such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words. Dyslexia affects individuals throughout their lives; however, its impact can change at different stages in a person’s life. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can make it difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical school environment.

Dyslexia doesn’t have to be a roadblock to success. It doesn’t mean that you or your child’s teachers should lower your expectations for the child. Artists, athletes, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, and lawyers all have been able to achieve great things despite trouble with reading.

## Online Resources or Parents:

### The National Center for Learning Disabilities

[www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

### LD Online

[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

### International Dyslexia Association

[www.aida.org](http://www.aida.org)

### Reading Rockets

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/how-most-children-learn-read>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-reading>

### For More Information

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## Does My Child Have Dyslexia?

*What to Look For, What to Do*



Karla Frye  
MVESC School  
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# Dyslexia - What to Look For; What to Do

## How We Read

No one is born knowing how to read; rather, we all have to learn how. When you read, your brain has to do a lot of things at once. It has to connect letters with sounds and put those sounds together in the right order.

The brain has to help you put letters, words, and paragraphs together in ways that let you read them quickly and understand the meaning of the text. It also has to connect words and sentences with other kinds of knowledge. When you see “c-a-t” on a piece of paper, your brain doesn’t just have to read the word “cat,” it also has to make the connection that “cat” means a furry, four-legged animal that meows.

When you have dyslexia, your brain takes longer to make some of these connections and does it in more steps. It has trouble matching the letters you see on the page with the sounds those letters and combinations of letters make. And when you have trouble with that step, it makes all the other steps harder.\*

\*Shaywitz, M.D., S. (2002) Based on content from “Overcoming Dyslexia.” Retrieved from <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/whatisdyslexia.html>

## Common Signs of Dyslexia

### Young Children

- Talking later than expected
- Slower than average vocabulary acquisition
- Difficulty rhyming
- Trouble following multi-step directions

### School-Age Children

#### Difficulty:

- Learning letters and their sounds
- Learning the connection between the visual letter and its sound
- Reading single words, such as words on a flashcard
- Distinguishing words that sound alike but have different meanings
- Memorizing number facts
- Understanding letter patterns
- Learning and remembering or correctly using new words

#### May:

- Confuse small words, such as “at” and “to”
- Reverse letters, like d and b, p and g
- Reverse words, such as top for pot

## What Can I Do To Help?

If you are concerned about your child’s reading progress, you can:

- Check with your child’s teacher to see how much reading support he/she gets daily. Ask if at least some of the reading instruction is systematic, explicit and phonics-based.
- Consult with your child’s teacher if you think your child’s problems are severe. The teacher should be able to address your question and may have data to support his or her answer. Most children with dyslexia will not have difficulties severe enough for special education services, but in some cases, your child could be referred for evaluation.
- Read with your child daily. Your child’s teacher will be a good source of information on the best way to do this so it is both fun and educational for your child. Have your child read different kinds of materials, such as comic books, novels, and magazines.
- Remember that children learn at different speeds and there is a range of reading and math levels in every classroom. If your child is not right on target at all times, this does not necessarily mean there is a problem.

