

# Dyslexia News

## *Between the Lines*

Volume 1

## What is Dyslexia?

### *Definition*

According to the definition adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board in 2002, Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by 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 growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

*Dyslexia is neurobiological, meaning the brain of an individual with dyslexia is different (not less) than the brain of a person without dyslexia.*

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### *Signs and Symptoms of Dyslexia*

*Dyslexia can manifest in many different ways. It's important to note that your child may experience some of the difficulties on the following list and it may or may not mean it is dyslexia. Formal testing of reading, language, and writing is necessary to determine a dyslexia identification.*

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## Dyslexia

### *Common Myths:*

- Reversals of letters and words are symptoms of dyslexia.
- Dyslexia is caused by a visual problem.
- Dyslexia is a sign of low intelligence.
- Dyslexia affects boys more than girls.
- Dyslexia is curable.
- A person with dyslexia will never learn to read.
- Because people with dyslexia think differently, their difficulties in reading leads to gifts in other areas. Or the opposite, are not gifted or talented.
- Dyslexia is caused by problems in visual perception.

Source: University of Florida Literacy Institute.

## Signs and Symptoms Oral Language

- Late learning to talk; may have trouble pronouncing words
- Difficulty acquiring vocabulary or using age-appropriate grammar
- Difficulty following directions
- Inability to rhyme
- Doesn't notice when nursery rhymes have repeated first sounds (Peter Piper Picked...)
- Inconsistent memory for words, lists, and directions
- Trouble knowing the sounds of letters
- Slow to learn the alphabet letter names or forms

## Signs and symptoms Reading

- Difficulty learning to read
- Difficulty remembering names and shapes of letters, or naming letters rapidly
- Poor sight word recognition (the, am, said)
- Persistent confusion with b, d, p, q (beyond first grade)
- Misreading or omitting common short words (a, you, so)
- "Stumbles" through longer words
- Poor reading comprehension because words aren't being read
- Slow, laborious oral reading
- Trouble persisting with and comprehending longer reading assignments

## Signs and symptoms Written Language

- Difficulty organizing written language into sentences and paragraphs
- Trouble learning to spell (student may do well on weekly spelling tests, but has many mistakes in daily work)
- Difficulty proofreading
- Commonly confuses homonyms in writing (their, there, they're)

Source:  
<https://www.commlearn.com/what-is-dyslexia-characteristics-and-signs>

# Prevalence of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is considered the most common of all specific learning disabilities affecting 5-17% of children in the general population.

Source: Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines.



Screening for dyslexia is important! The earlier the intervention the better the response due brain elasticity and amount of content that a student receives in later grades. Screening can begin in pre-K but no later than kindergarten and should take place at least three times a year through second grade. Screeners are quick assessments and are predictors of future reading performance.

International Dyslexia Association

## Kindergarten Screening

Phonological awareness including phoneme segmentation, blending, onset and rime; rapid automatic naming including letter naming fluency; letter sound association; and phonological memory, including non-word repetition.

## First Grade Screening

Phoneme awareness, specifically phoneme segmentation, blending, and manipulation tasks; letter naming fluency; letter sound association; phonological memory, including nonword repetition; oral vocabulary; and word recognition fluency.

## Second Grade Screening

Word identification, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Word identification assessments should include real and nonsense words.

## K-2 Grade Screening

Also predictive of reading outcomes are assessment of oral expressive and receptive language. These assessments include vocabulary, syntax and comprehension. Measures at the K-2 level are limited.

Source: International Dyslexia Association

## Parent and School Partnering Tips

1. Communicate student difficulties/or and successes with one another.
2. If you're also assessing your child outside of school, coordinate the evaluations to avoid duplication of assessments.
3. Attend local conferences and Zoom discussions regarding dyslexia and share your learnings with the school..
4. Join your SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council); get on the mailings lists for the Federation for Children with Special Needs and Massachusetts Advocates for Children.
5. Communicate about your school's dyslexia screening measures and your child's results/trends.
6. Consider assistive technology that will help with reading and/or improve reading (The Immersive Reader, text to speech, Bookshare.org, LearningAlly.com, etc.)

**meet & greet**



Meet **Orlando Bloom** who positively discusses his "superpowers" with dyslexia!

## Additional Resources

Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines - <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/dyslexia-guidelines.pdf>  
International Dyslexia Association - <https://dyslexiaida.org/>  
Decoding Dyslexia Massachusetts - <http://www.decodingdyslexiama.org/>  
Wrights Law - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>  
Children Dyslexia Center - <https://www.childrensdyslexiacenters.org/>  
Commonwealth Learning Center - <https://www.commlearn.com/>