Dyslexia

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Definition

Dyslexia is most typically characterized as a learning difficulty in the area of reading in which the degree of difficulty falls on a continuum.
The degree of difficulty that students experience may range from mild to severe.

Students with dyslexia may be served with:
- Tier supports in general education;
- Section 504 Plan with accommodations; or
- Special education and related services.

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

IDEA 2004 – Sec. 300.8(c)(10)(i)
SBE Policy 7219

Phonemic awareness: Knowledge and ability to manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words
Phonics: Knowledge of the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds
Reading Fluency (includes oral reading skills): Ability to read accurately with appropriate rate, expression, and phrasing
**Five Essential Components of Reading**

- **Vocabulary**: Knowledge of words, their meanings, and appropriate contexts in which to use them
- **Reading Comprehension**: Understanding of the meaning of reading passages (connected text)

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**Areas of Difficulty**

Characteristics typically associated with dyslexia include deficits in one or more of the following components of reading:

- **Phonological Awareness**: Knowledge and ability to manipulate the sounds in spoken words
- **Phonological Memory**: Short-term memory for spoken words and sounds
- **Rapid Automatic Naming**: Ability to name objects, letters, and digits accurately and fluently

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**Phonological Awareness**

- Includes awareness:
  - of sounds in a language
  - of rhymes
  - that sentences can be broken down into words, syllables, and sounds
  - Ability to talk about, reflect upon, and manipulate sounds
Detecting rhyme and alliteration (use of similar consonants)
Identifying rhymes and words that start/end with the same sounds
Segmenting words into smaller units (syllables and sounds)
Blending separated sounds into words
Manipulating sounds in words by adding, deleting, or substituting

Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes rhymes, words, syllables, phonemes, and onsets/rimes.
Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes, the smallest unit of sound in words (e.g., school has four phonemes /s/ /k/ /u/ /l/)
Therefore, phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness.

Memory and reading are interactive.
Insufficient working memory capacity or poorly organized long-term memory can cause difficulties with reading or reading comprehension.
Phonological working memory refers to a process of receiving, analyzing and processing of sound elements in language.
Phonological Memory

• Phonological working memory can be difficult to distinguish from the entirety of phonological skills.
• Narrow working memory adds challenges in learning to read and may enhance other causes behind reading difficulties such as:
  • Learning of new phonological combinations or
  • Development of automated reading.

Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN)

• RAN measures how quickly individuals can name aloud objects, pictures, colors, or symbols (letters or digits).
• RAN assesses a wide range of cognitive skills.
  • Naming speed is a complex process involving processes beyond the phonological system.

Intervention

• Intervention for children suspected of having dyslexia should follow the course of any other student with difficulties in the school environment.
• Students may be served in the Tiered model of interventions per State Board Policy 4300.
Students may be served successfully in:
- **Tier I**: quality classroom instruction, quality curriculum, universal screen
- **Tier II**: appropriate intervention(s) in small groups to address difficulties
- **Tier III**: individualized intervention to meet the needs of the student as identified through the TST process

Students in Tier II/III must receive:
- Interventions based on scientifically-based research;
- Screening and instructional/diagnostic reading assessments; and
- Regular progress monitoring on skills being targeted and grade-level general outcome measures.
Evaluation for Services
for Students with Disabilities

- Refer all students to the MET for comprehensive evaluations under IDEA if they do not respond to tier interventions.
- Students may be evaluated for a Section 504 Plan providing accommodations to instruction, assignments, and assessments.

Professional Development

All instructional and intervention staff should receive ongoing, high-quality professional development focused on:
- The essential elements of reading;
- Intervention approaches for students who are struggling with reading; and
- Accommodations that may assist students who have dyslexia.

References

- Government recognized websites:
  - What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
  - Review by WWC of common interventions proposed for students with dyslexia
  - Intervention Central
House Bill 1031

Contact

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With any questions concerning House Bill 1031 and/or the Parent Choice for Dyslexia Scholarships

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