



## Warning Signs of Dyslexia

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) defines dyslexia as follows:

**“Dyslexia** is a specific learning disability that is neurological 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 the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

Excel Achievement Center recommends that a student should exhibit 5 or more of the following behaviors before dyslexia should be investigated further:

### General Warning Signs:

- Appears bright, highly intelligent and articulate, but unable to read, write, or spell at grade level.
- Teachers may say the child is “lazy” or “not trying hard enough” despite spending several hours on homework each week
- Isn’t “behind enough” to qualify for additional help through the school district
- Talented in art, drama, music, sports, mechanics, story-telling, designing, building, etc.
- Seems to “zone out” or daydream often; gets lost easily or loses track of time
- Complains of stomach aches or headaches while reading
- Learns best through hands-on experiences, demonstrations, experiments and visual aids
- Excellent long-term memory for experiences, locations, and faces.
- Poor memory for sequences, facts, and information
- Thinks primarily with images and feelings.
- Extremely disorderly or compulsively orderly
- Can be class clown, trouble-maker, or too quiet.
- Has unusually early or late developmental stages (talking, crawling, walking, tying shoes)
- Strong sense of justice; emotionally sensitive, strives for perfection
- Mistakes and symptoms increase dramatically with confusion, time pressure, or emotional stress.
- Can be extra deep or light sleeper; bedwetting may continue beyond appropriate age.

### Early Childhood Warning Signs:

- Delayed speech
- Mixing up sounds/syllables in long words
- Chronic ear infections
- Late establishing a dominant hand
- Trouble memorizing their phone number, address, and/or the alphabet
- A close relative with dyslexia

### School Age Warning Signs:

- Dysgraphia: Trouble with the act of handwriting. The child's handwriting will appear very sloppy and difficult to read. (May have an unusual pencil grip.)
- Copying from the board is a long, tedious task
- Letter/number reversals continuing past the end of 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- Confused by letters, numbers, words, and sequences such as phone numbers or the alphabet
- Terrible spelling
- Slow, choppy, inaccurate reading:
  - \* skips or misreads prepositions (at, to, of)
  - \* difficulty sounding out words
  - \* ignores suffixes ( \_\_ing, \_\_ed, \_\_s,)
  - \* makes substitutions
- Difficulty telling time on a clock with hands, managing time, learning to sequence information or tasks, or being on time.
- Difficulty with counting money and making change.
- Trouble with math facts and computation. Seems to rely on finger counting and other tricks to solve easy problems
- Extremely messy bedroom, backpack, desk, or locker
- May have difficulty putting thoughts into words. (Speaks in halting phrases, leaves sentences incomplete, and mispronounces long words or syllables when speaking).
- Clumsy, uncoordinated, poor at ball or team sports; difficulties with fine and/or gross motor skills; prone to motion-sickness
- Often confuses left/right, over/under