

How Can I tell if a Primary School Child may be Dyslexic?

Handy Hints for primary school teachers

Lindsay Peer, Education Director, BDA

General

- speed of processing - spoken and/or written language slow
- poor concentration
- has difficulty following instructions
- forgetful of words

Written Work

- has a poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- produces messy work with many crossings out and words tried several times, eg wippe, wype, wiep, wipe
- is persistently confused by letters which look similar, particularly b/d, p/g, p/q, n/u, m/w
- has poor handwriting with many 'reversals' and badly formed letters
- spells a 'Word several different ways in one piece of writing
- makes anagrams of words, eg tired for tried, breaded for bearded
- produces badly set-out written work, doesn't stay close to the margin
- has poor pencil grip
- produces phonetic and bizarre spelling, not age/ability appropriate
- uses, unusual sequencing of letters or words

Reading

- makes poor reading. progress, especially using look and say methods
- finds it difficult to blend letters together
- has difficulty in establishing syllable division or knowing the 9 beginnings and endings of words
- pronunciation of words is unusual
- no expression in reading - comprehension poor
- is hesitant and laboured in reading, especially when reading aloud
- misses out words when reading, or adds extra words
- fails to recognise familiar words
- loses the point of the story being read or Written
- has difficulty in picking out the most important points from a passage

Numeracy

- shows confusion with number order, eg units, tens, hundreds is confused by symbols such as + and x signs has difficulty remembering anything in a sequential, order, e.g. tables, days of the week, the alphabet

DYSLEXIA - SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Time

- has difficulty in learning to tell the time
- shows poor time keeping and general awareness
- has poor personal organisation
- has difficulty remembering what day of the week it is, his/her birth date, seasons of the year, months of the year
- difficulty with concepts - yesterday, today, tomorrow

Skills

- has poor motor skills, leading to weaknesses in speed, control and accuracy of the pencil
- has a limited understanding of non-verbal communication
- is confused by the difference between left and right, up and down, east and west
- has indeterminate hand preference
- performs unevenly from day to day

Behaviour

- employs work avoidance tactics, such as sharpening pencils and looking for books
- seems to 'dream', does not seem to listen
- is easily distracted
- is the class clown or is disruptive or withdrawn (these are often cries for help)
- is excessively tired due to amount of concentration and effort required

A child who has a cluster of these difficulties together with some abilities may be dyslexic.

(Note Two copies of this, laminated, have been sent to every state primary school in England)

N.B. This checklist can be downloaded from the BDA website.

FROM THE DYSLEXIC HANDBOOK 2002 - Printed with permission from the British Dyslexic Association 98 London Road, Reading RG1 5 AU - UK

SPEED COPYING FOR EVERYONE - A WRITING COURSE

- 1. Choose a paragraph of the writing of your choice - children according to their age. (1-6 sentences)**
- 2. Remember 1 whole sentence, or a half, if it is too long.**
- 3. Then write sentence from memory - (no looking)**
- 4. Then write further sentences from memory - (no looking)**
- 5. Repeat this exercise 6 times.**
- 6. Now write the paragraph from memory.**

This exercise will help the memory (important for Dyslexics) spelling, grammar, punctuation and word order.

It is suggested that Speed Copying should be practised 20 minutes per day

DYSLEXIA - SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

BOOKS TO HELP ADULTS & CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA OR SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES - SUGGESTIONS

Alpha to Omega - Dr. Beve Homsby - older children and adults - Heinemann UK
Before Alpha - Dr. Beve Homsby - children - Souvenir Press- UK
Alpha to Omega Stories (older children & adults) - Hornsby International Dyslexic Centre- London
Reading by the Colors - Helen Irlen- - Adults - Avery Publishing Group, New York
What to do when you can't learn the times tables - Steve Chinn - Children & Adults Egon Publishers UK
Sum Hope - Steve Chinn - Adults & Children Souvenir Press or Egon Publishers UK
Overcoming Dyslexia- Dr. Beve Homsby- Guide for Families and Teachers - Optima Health Education UK
Dyslexia in Adults - Kathleen Nosek - Taylor Publishing - Texas - US
In the Mind's Eye - Thomas G. West - Adults - Prometheus Books - New York
The Survival Guide for Kids with LD - Gary Fisher - Free Spirit Publishing US -Children/Adults
Fitzroy Readers series (6 levels - pack of ten different stories at each level) very well structured phonic readers. Fitzroy Programs - Tel. 03 9489 5700
Fitzroy Word Families - Work Books - Fitzroy Programs - Tel. 03 9489 5700
Reading Freedom (Books 1 -4) Helen Calder - Pascal Press. Well- structured Phonic based program for reading. Easy for a parent to work through with a student. Suitable for children from 7 years old.
Magnetic Letter Board - Fun way to learn how to spell. Available through **SPELD** Some of these books will be available at Woollahra Library. They can be purchased at **SPELD** (Specific Learning Difficulties Assoc. of NSW- St. Ives - Tel.02 91447977 - see Leaflet
(Don't forget the M.M. Reading and Spelling Course- on cassette and the Read After Me Tapes at the Library)

MEMORY EXERCISES

Dyslexics often have poor short memories, so exercises are important.

CHILDREN

Start with naming objects in the home or street, picture books, food, toys, flowers, trees, clothes etc. Nursery Rhymes are very important especially with a recurring theme for children to repeat and then children's stories with a recurring theme e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears. See Book "Before Alpha" by Beve Hornsby which is also suitable for older children, with many ideas for you to choose.

ADULTS

The radio is a great help - see Programmes in The Guide - Monday - Sydney Morning Herald. Radio National 576 or 702 AM are excellent, but there is a wide choice. Record on cassette 1-3 minutes of the program. Stop - then recall. Repeat, if necessary, a few times. Record another 1-3 minutes and take notes - again repeat. This is a difficult exercise, but should be done daily. Progress will definitely be made after 2 weeks.

DYSLEXIA - SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

There are many Grammar books - one suggestion is the series "Grammar Practice" by Elaine Walker and Steve Elsworth - Longman - about \$26.00 with 4 Levels and Answer Key - Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate.

SPEED COPYING, see attached, is excellent for punctuation etc.

SPECIAL WORDS (without pictures)

Dyslexics usually see pictures or mental images. If they are unable to see an image, comprehension will be difficult. There are many words that can't produce a picture and these should be practised at length - reading and writing sentences using these words. You can add to this list.

a the and as at any ago be am is are was were because before between but can could can't come comes do does did doesn't up down in on off under below beneath above near round (the corner) over outside inside for from get got go goes went have had hers his how why when why what now of my your our their there will would shall should you're your whose who's its it's (it is) these those with without however nevertheless, in addition, interesting dull

WEBSITES

SPELD WEBSITE ~ www.speldnsw.org.au

IRLEN DYSLEXIA CENTRE - www.dyslexia.aust.com

BRITISH DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION WEBSITE - www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/

MEMORY EXERCISES

Dyslexics often have poor short memories, so exercises are important.

CHILDREN

Start with naming objects in the home or street, picture books, food, toys, flowers, trees, clothes etc. Nursery Rhymes are very important especially with a recurring theme for children to repeat and then children's stories with a recurring theme e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears. See Book "Before Alpha" by Beve Hornsby which is also suitable for older children, with many ideas for you to choose.

ADULTS

The radio is a great help - see Programmes in The Guide - Monday - Sydney Morning Herald. Radio National 576 or 702 AM are excellent, but there is a wide choice. Record on cassette 1-3 minutes of the program. Stop - then recall. Repeat, if necessary, a few times. Record another 1-3 minutes and take notes - again repeat. This is a difficult exercise, but should be done daily. Progress will definitely be made after 2 weeks.

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

There are many Grammar books - one suggestion is the series "Grammar Practice" by Elaine Walker and Steve Elsworth - Longman - about \$26.00 with 4 Levels and Answer Key - Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate.

SPEED COPYING, see attached, is excellent for punctuation etc.

SPEED COPYING FOR EVERYONE - A WRITING COURSE

- 1. Choose a paragraph of the writing of your choice - children according to their age. (1-6 sentences)**
- 2. Remember 1 whole sentence, or a half, if it is too long.**
- 3. Then write sentence from memory - (no looking)**
- 4. Then write further sentences from memory - (no looking)**
- 5. Repeat this exercise 6 times.**
- 6. Now write the paragraph from memory.**

This exercise will help the memory (important for Dyslexics) spelling, grammar, punctuation and word order.

It is suggested that Speed Copying should be practised 20 minutes per day