

Swipe/Click Through Guide Here 

DYSLEXIA GUIDEBOOK

School Year 2023-2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>DYSLEXIA</u>	p. 3
<u>Signs & Symptoms</u>	p. 4
<u>Myths vs. Facts</u>	p. 6
<u>WHAT'S NEW IN DC SCHOOLS?</u>	p. 8
<u>DC Law: Addressing Dyslexia</u>	p. 8
<u>Universal Screeners</u>	p. 10
<u>Support for Older Students</u>	p. 13
<u>The Science of Reading</u>	p. 14
<u>HOW TO HELP AT HOME</u>	p. 16
<u>WHAT TO ASK</u>	p. 18
<u>GLOSSARY</u>	p. 19
<u>RESOURCES & REFERENCES</u>	p. 20

This guide is intended to inform families about reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, outline efforts to support students with reading difficulties, and connect families to related resources.



DYSLEXIA

DYSLEXIA is a condition that can make it difficult to read, spell, write, and process the sounds of language. While dyslexia can impact learning, it's not related to intelligence. People with dyslexia are just as smart as their peers.



Up to 5–20% of the global population have some of the symptoms of dyslexia.



Dyslexia often runs in families. Children who have a parent or sibling with dyslexia are at higher risk for dyslexia.



Most children with dyslexia can become skilled readers if their difficulties are identified early and they receive strong instruction.



Difficulties due to dyslexia can range from mild to severe and can occur in people of all backgrounds.



People with dyslexia don't outgrow it. Dyslexia is a lifelong condition, but people who receive good support can become skilled readers and writers.



The exact causes of dyslexia are not completely clear, but brain imaging studies show differences in how the brains of dyslexic people develop and function.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Dyslexia is the most common learning disability. Individuals with dyslexia typically have problems with language processing.

Someone with dyslexia might struggle to hear the individual sounds that make up spoken words. This will make it challenging to learn how the letters of the alphabet match to those sounds. This can make reading and writing difficult. This can then impact how an individual understands text.

A list of common signs and symptoms of dyslexia are provided below. These characteristics alone do not mean an individual has dyslexia.

PRESCHOOL



- Trouble learning common nursery rhymes and rhyming patterns (ex. cat, bat, mat)
- Trouble learning the names of letters in the alphabet
- Unable to recognize letters in their own name
- Persistent "baby talk"

KINDERGARDEN & FIRST GRADE



- Cannot sound out simple words (ex: bog, pep,) that are unfamiliar
- Has a difficult time matching letters with sounds and printed words with spoken words
- Guesses words based on the first one or two letters in the word
- Guesses words using pictures or the story
- Avoids reading and writing
- Spells simple words with inaccuracy



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

SECOND GRADE - HIGH SCHOOL



Students may show some of the following:

- Reading is slow and awkward
- Has trouble reading unfamiliar words
- Avoids reading out loud
- Uses vague language such as "stuff" or "things"
- Guesses words based on the first one or two letters in the word
- Uses context clues to try and guess what a word is
- Difficulty spelling accurately
- Difficulty matching sounds and letters



[Queensland Department of Education: What Is Dyslexia?](#)

MYTH vs. FACT

Understandings about dyslexia have changed over time. Here are some of the most common myths about dyslexia.

MYTH

Dyslexia is a vision problem.



FACT

Vision problems don't cause dyslexia. People with dyslexia are no more likely to have vision problems than other people. Dyslexia is typically an issue with how people process language.

MYTH

Children with Dyslexia see and write letters backwards.



FACT

Some people with dyslexia write letters backwards and some don't, it's not necessarily a sign that someone has dyslexia. Letter reversals are common for many students until first or second grade.

MYTH

Dyslexia is caused by not reading enough at home.



FACT

Being exposed to reading is important for all students, but dyslexia isn't due to a lack of reading at home.



MYTH vs. FACT

MYTH

Dyslexia goes away once kids learn to read.



FACT

Strong instruction can make a big difference in helping dyslexic students learn to read, but there is no "cure" for dyslexia. Dyslexia is a lifelong brain-based difference.

MYTH

Dyslexia only happens in the English language.



FACT

Dyslexia exists all over the world and in all languages.



[Reading Rockets](#) and the [National Center for Improving Literacy](#):
What are some misconceptions about dyslexia?



WHAT'S NEW IN DC SCHOOLS?

DC LAW 23-191: ADDRESSING DYSLEXIA & OTHER DIFFICULTIES AMENDMENT ACT OF 2020

National Momentum Around Reading

With DC Law 23-191, the District of Columbia joins states nationwide in setting new expectations for how schools teach students to read.

Who Is The Law For?

- Although the name of the law references dyslexia, DC Law 23-191 is for readers in all the public and public charter schools in the district.
 - The subtitle of DC Law 23-191, "Access to Reading for All," draws from research showing that all children with early reading problems, whether they're at risk for dyslexia or not, benefit from early identification and targeted reading instruction.
 - For students at risk for dyslexia, early identification and intervention have been found to increase their academic and emotional well-being, even helping to prevent the appearance "of reading difficulties altogether."

What's in the Law?

- DC Law 23-191 outlines the following developments for DC schools:
 - It provides an official definition of dyslexia.
 - It requires additional training for teachers.
 - It requires that schools test kindergarten through the second-grade students for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, using a universal reading screener.
 - It requires schools to share universal screener results with families when a student is flagged for being at risk for reading difficulties.
 - It requires schools to provide intervention for students at risk for reading difficulties.
 - It will require schools to adopt a science-based reading program.



TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

2023-24

- All public and public charter school staff receive training on dyslexia awareness, universal screening, and the current science behind reading instruction.
- Kindergarten through 2nd grade students will be screened for reading difficulties three times a year.
- If the universal screening results show that a student is at risk for reading difficulties:
 - families will receive written notification of results.
 - families will be invited to schedule a meeting with their child's teacher or school team to discuss the screener results and student support.
 - the student will receive intervention using science-backed reading instruction that targets the areas of need.
- Public and public charter schools in the District will send a letter to the Office of The State Superintendent every year indicating that they have complied with DC Law 23-191.



2024-25

- All public and public charter school in the district will adopt a reading program based on the science of reading.



UNIVERSAL SCREENERS

- Universal reading screeners are brief (10-15 minute) tests given multiple times a year to measure the skills students need to learn to read.
- The results from these tests can be used to
 - identify student strengths and growth areas
 - monitor progress throughout the academic year
 - identify students who need extra support, including those who may have dyslexia

UNIVERSAL SCREENERS DO NOT DIAGNOSE DYSLEXIA

- Although universal screeners are effective at showing which students may have difficulties with learning how to read, they do not diagnose dyslexia.
- Students may be identified as being “at risk” for reading difficulties for a variety of reasons.
- The results from universal screeners should be used to make good instructional decisions about how to best support students.
- Students who do not respond to strong, targeted reading intervention may require further testing.



[Reading Rockets](#) and the [National Center for Improving Literacy](#):
What does research say about screening?



UNIVERSAL SCREENERS

What's Being Screened

- [DC Law 23-191](#) requires schools to screen kindergarten to grade 2 students three times a year. OSSE's list of approved screeners can be found [here](#). Students will be screened in the in the following areas:

Rapid Automatized Naming

RAN asks students to name familiar items as quickly as possible. Slow naming speed is related to challenges in learning to read. To learn more about RAN click [here](#).

Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

This is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the sounds that make up spoken words. To learn more about phonological awareness click [here](#).

Letter Sound Correspondence

This refers to matching the sounds of spoken language to the letters that represent those sounds. To hear the correct pronunciation of those sounds, or phonemes, click [here](#).

Phonics

This is reading instruction that builds off of letter sound correspondence and teaches readers to identify or "decode" words as they go from simple to more complex. For more on phonics click [here](#).



UNIVERSAL SCREENING RESULTS

- Research shows that students do best when schools and families work together to support their learning. Sharing and talking about universal screener results is a great way to begin that collaboration.

Getting Your Student's Screener Results



- [DC Law 23-191](#) outlines that schools will notify parents and caregivers when a student is “flagged for being at risk for reading difficulties.” This may be mailed or emailed to you.
- If you do not receive your student’s universal screener results, be sure to follow-up with your child’s teacher.

Understanding Your Student's Screener Results

- If your child has lower than expected results on their universal reading screener, they may benefit from additional instruction and support with their reading skills.
- If you have questions about your student’s screening results, ask to have them explained to you.
- It is recommended to communicate early and often with your student’s school team about your student’s progress and instructional support.
- Most screeners include a comprehensive parent report to help explain results. If your student’s school sends a summary or description of the screening, you can request the full screening report.



For additional information on OSSE approved screeners, see the Universal Screener Implementation Guidance for LEA's
osse.dc.gov/page/dyslexia



SUPPORT FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Introduction

Students can benefit from reading support at any age. If you have concerns about your child's reading skills, here are steps for seeking additional support at school. For suggestions on how to help at home, [see page 17.](#)

- While schools are not required to complete universal screening after second grade, each school has diagnostic or benchmark assessments that inform instruction.
- You can ask for information about your student's progress and learning at any time, regardless of their grade level.
- You can also ask your student's teacher about the school's literacy intervention model. Examples could include:
 - [Response to Intervention systems \(RTI\)](#),
 - [Multi-Tiered System of Support \(MTSS\)](#),
 - and [High Impact Tutoring \(HIT\)](#)
- Families or school teams that suspect a student has a learning disability, including dyslexia, can contact their school's Special Education point of contact to request further evaluations.
 - Schools are required to meet with you within 30 days of your request to discuss next steps.

For additional information on navigating special education and related services visit

studentadvocate.dc.gov/node/1153932

See [page 21](#) and [22](#) for additional support



THE SCIENCE OF READING

The science of reading refers to research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. Decades of research from around the world points to how reading and writing develop, why some have difficulty, and how educators can assess, teach, and improve student outcomes.

THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

The Simple View of Reading is a formula that shows the widely accepted view that skilled reading has two basic components: **word recognition** (decoding) and **language comprehension**. The Simple View formula has been supported and validated by a number of research studies.

**Word
Recognition**

X

**Language
Comprehension**

=

**Reading
Comprehension**

What: the ability to read words correctly and effortlessly

How: by connecting letter names to letter sounds and sounding out the word till it becomes automatic

What: the ability to understand and interpret text

How: by learning and using reading strategies such as summarizing, questioning, inferring and more.

What: the ability to read words and understand text.

How: by being proficient in both word recognition and language comprehension



[Reading Rockets](#): The Simple View of Reading



THE SCIENCE OF READING

STRUCTURED LITERACY

- Structured literacy is a research-supported approach to teaching students to read and write.
- Structured literacy has been shown to benefit all learners, including students at risk for reading difficulties like dyslexia.
- Structured literacy does not refer to one program. It refers to instructional approaches that are clear, direct and organized around teaching the many components that go into skilled reading and comprehension.
- Structured literacy is not just phonics! It is made up of many components that are taught across years of instruction.



Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia:
Focus on Structured Literacy



HOW TO HELP AT HOME

Pre-K



- Talk to your child! Language is the foundation of reading development.
- Read aloud to your child. Let your child hold books and turn their pages.
- Give everything a name: this will help build vocabulary.
- Point out text everywhere! Talk about how written words are all around you.

Kindergarten



- Have discussions with your child. Ask them to explain what they did at school or recess.
- Play with language! Sing silly songs, read books that rhyme and play rhyme games throughout the day.
- Read aloud to your child and discuss how your reading relates to their everyday world.
- Talk about the alphabet and play scavenger hunts for them as you go through your day. Begin to connect these letters to sounds.
- Play sound games: identify the first sounds in words like their names. Ask them to "put words together" - can you guess what this word is? m - u - g.
- Encourage writing and drawing!

1st Grade



- Bring along books everywhere! Make reading routine.
- Make regular visits to the library and let your child choose books that they love.
- Ask questions while reading with your child: "how would you feel if that happened to you?" "Why do you think they did that?"
- Take turns reading as part of your reading routine.
- If your child makes a mistake, gently show them the letters they missed and ask them to blend again. Many beginning readers will try to guess what words might be. Try to encourage real reading!
- Write! Ask your child to write grocery lists, letters, poems anything!

HOW TO HELP AT HOME

2nd Grade



- When your child is reading a word, for the first time have them reread that sentence then talk quickly about its meaning.
- Make writing a ritual! Just like reading, writing everyday is a great way to build your child's skills.
- Make a writing checklist:
 - "Do all of my sentences end with punctuation? Yes/No"
 - "Do all my sentences start with a capital letter? Yes/No."
- Make your own books together!
- Talk about how words come from families. For example, point out how a word like know relates to a word like knowledge.

3rd Grade to 4th Grade



- Continue with daily reading and writing activities with high interest books and writing projects.
- Encourage your child to read aloud to help focus on the speed and accuracy of their reading (fluency).
- Look up unfamiliar words together and make a point to use those words as you go through your days together.
- Find a book series your child is interested in. This will get them to read one book after another!
- Help your child break down larger words into smaller parts.

Older Readers



- Help your child find magazines or books that connect to their interests in libraries, bookstores, and online.
- Encourage your child to read aloud and help them break down and pronounce challenging words.
- Discuss the meaning of words identified in these shared readings.
- Read the same book as your child and discuss what happened after each chapter.

For more tips on how to help your child read at home, [click here](#).



WHAT TO ASK

The questions below can be used to start a collaboration with your child's teacher when it comes to reading instruction.



Can you help me understand my student's universal screener results?



What are my child's academic strengths and areas of improvement? What are their reading and writing goals?



How is the information from the Universal Screener being used to make decisions about my student's language and literacy needs?



Is my child receiving extra support or intervention with reading inside or outside of the class?



How will you let me know if my child is making progress? Will they continue getting support after the 2nd grade?



Who can provide information about additional testing for dyslexia and other special education services?



What's the difference between the help my student is receiving and what is available through Special Education with an IEP?



GLOSSARY AND KEY TERMS

Links are embedded to provide more information on each of the terms.

Click on underlined words for additional information.

- **Comprehension**: Making sense of what is read. Comprehension depends on good word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge, and language ability.
- **Dyscalculia**: A specific learning disability in learning and understanding mathematical concepts.
- **Dysgraphia**: Extremely poor handwriting or the inability to perform the motor movements required for handwriting. This condition is associated with neurological dysfunction.
- **Fluency**: Reading words at an adequate rate with a high level of accuracy, appropriate expression, and understanding.
- **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)**: A private evaluation from an outside source. Parents usually pay for this type of private testing, but if you are dissatisfied with your child's school based evaluation you can request an Independent Education Evaluation at public expense.
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**: A document that sets out the child's placement in special education as well as the specific goals, short-term objectives, and benchmarks for measuring progress each year.
- **Phonics**: The paired association between letters and sounds; an approach to the teaching of reading and spelling that emphasizes sound-symbol relationships, especially in early instruction.
- **Phonological Awareness**: The sensitivity to the sound structure in spoken language. Phonological awareness progresses from rhyming; to syllable counting; to detecting first, last, and middle sounds; to phonemic awareness, which includes segmenting, adding, deleting, and substituting sounds in words.
- **Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)**: The ability to quickly name aloud a series of familiar items on a page. These include letters, numbers, colors or objects.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**: A model for providing intervention that includes assessment, evidence-based interventions, progress monitoring, and ongoing adjustments for addressing student needs.
- **Structured Literacy**: Explicitly teaches systematic word-identification/decoding strategies. This benefits all students, and is vital for those with dyslexia.



READING RESOURCES

Learning Disabilities Association of America

<https://ldaamerica.org>

Washington Literacy Center

<https://www.washlit.org/>

DC Reading Clinic (available for DCPS)

<https://www.dcreadingclinic.org/>

The National Center for Learning Disabilities

<https://www.nclid.org/?s=dyslexia>

Institute of Education Sciences

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceGuide/wwc_foundationalreading_040717.pdf

The Dyslexia Initiative: Parent Sessions

<https://www.thedyslexiainitiative.org/the-parent-sessions-season-1>

Reading Rockets

<https://www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents>

University of Michigan Dyslexia Help

<http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/parents/living-with-dyslexia/home>

The Dyslexia Resource

<https://dyslexiaresource.org/>

Storyline Online

<https://storylineonline.net/>

Get Ready to Read

<https://www.getreadytoread.org/>

International Dyslexia Association

Free Dyslexia Digital Library

<https://dyslexialibrary.org/>



Links are embedded for each of the resources listed above.



RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS



Local Resources

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

aje-dc.org

Phone: (888) 327-8060

Capital Area Branch of The International Dyslexia Association

dc.dyslexiaida.org

Phone: (301) 906-1630

DC Office of Human Rights

ohr.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 727-4559

Email: ohr@dc.gov

DC Public Charter School Board

dcpceb.org

Phone: (202) 328-2660

DC Public Schools

dcpss.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 442-5885

Decoding Dyslexia DC

decodingdyslexiadc.org

Phone: (240) 545-5323

Email: DecodingDyslexiaDC@gmail.com

Office of The State Superintendent (OSSE)

osse.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 727-6436

Office of The Student Advocate

studentadvocate.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 741-4692

Email: student.advocate@dc.gov

Office of The Ombudsman for Public Education

educationombudsman.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 741-0886

Email: educationombudsman@dc.gov

DC Special Education Hub

specialeducation.dc.gov/

Phone: (202) 671-2890

Email: specialeducation@dc.gov



National Resources

National Center for Learning Disabilities

ncld.org

National Center on Improving Literacy

improvingliteracy.org

Email: nciliteracy@gmail.com

The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity

dyslexia.yale.edu

The Office of Special Education Programs

ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/about.html

Phone: (202) 245-7100

Children's Dyslexia Centers, Inc.

childrensdyslexiacenters.org

Phone: (877) 861-0528

Learning Ally

learningally.org

Phone: (800) 221-4792

LD Online

ldonline.org

Understood

understood.org

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

sites.ed.gov/idea/

The following resources may have a cost
associated with their services:

The Reading League

Phone: (315) 362-2620

Email: info@thereadingleague.org

Links are embedded for each of the resources listed above.



SOURCES

Council of the District of Columbia

D.C. Law 23-191. Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties Amendment Act of 2020. (2020). Retrieved from <https://code.dccouncil.us/us/dc/council/laws/23-191>

Decoding Dyslexia DC

Decoding Dyslexia - Washington DC. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.decodingdyslexiadc.org/>

District of Columbia Public Schools

DCPS Printable Assessment Descriptions and Calendar. (2022). Retrieved from <https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-printable-assessment-descriptions-and-calendar>

Dyslexia Help

Debunking the Myths about Dyslexia. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/dyslexics/learn-about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia/debunking-common-myths-about-dyslexia>

Education Week

What Teachers Should Know About the Science of Reading. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HGS9EG0HgU>

Gaab Lab

Dyslexia Myths. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.gaablab.com/dyslexia-myths>

IES: Practice Guides: What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguides>

IES: Literacy Tips for Parents of Adolescents

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_SE_Literacy_Tips_for_Parents_of_Adolescents.pdf

International Dyslexia Association

International Dyslexia Association. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.dyslexiaida.org/>

Improving Literacy

National Center on Improving Literacy. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://improvingliteracy.org/>



SOURCES

National Center on Intensive Intervention

Phonics Inventory. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Phonics-Inventory_508.pdf.

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/parcc#:~:text=Topics-,The%20Partnership%20for%20Assessment%20of%20Readiness%20or%20College%20and%20Careers,Core%20State%20Standards%20\(CCSS\).](https://osse.dc.gov/parcc#:~:text=Topics-,The%20Partnership%20for%20Assessment%20of%20Readiness%20or%20College%20and%20Careers,Core%20State%20Standards%20(CCSS).)

National Library of Medicine

The prevalence of Dyslexia:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8183124/#:~:text=Searching%20for%20what%20the%20prevalence,for%20at%20least%20three%20reasons.>

Reading Rockets

Words Decoding and Phonics. (n.d.). Retrieved from: [readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonics#:~:text=Decoding%20is%20the%20ability%20to,they%20haven%27t%20seen%20before.](https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonics#:~:text=Decoding%20is%20the%20ability%20to,they%20haven%27t%20seen%20before.)

The Simple View of Reading. Retrieved from:

<https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/about-reading/articles/simple-view-reading>

RTI Action Network

Screening for Reading Problems in Grades 4 Through 12.

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening/screening-for-reading-problems-in-grades-4-through-12>

The Reading League

Science of Reading: Defining Guide. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.thereadingleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Science-of-Reading-eBook-2022.pdf>

Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia:

Focus on Structured Literacy. <https://mts.u.edu/dyslexia/index.php>

Understood.org

Understood: For Learning and Thinking Differences. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.understood.org/>

What is decoding? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/decoding-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>

United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Home. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/>

Virginia Department of Education

Specific Learning Disability Supplementary Guide Dyslexia: Frequently Asked Questions. (2017). Retrieved from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/learning_disability/sid-dyslexia-guide.pdf



NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE?

Our Request for Assistance (RFA) Line operates Monday through Friday from 9 am-5 pm. Our staff members answer live and are prepared to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding your student or public education in the District.

RFA Line: 202.741.4692

OFFICE OF THE STUDENT ADVOCATE

The Office of the Student Advocate was established by the Council of the District of Columbia through the Parent and Student Empowerment Act of 2013 . The office provides guidance and resource supports for families in order to assist them in navigating our complex system of public education in DC.

For more information, visit our [website](#).



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the state education agency for the District of Columbia charged with raising the quality of education for all DC residents. OSSE serves as the District's liaison to the US Department of Education and works closely with the District's traditional and public charter schools to achieve its key functions:

For more information, visit our [website](#).

OSSE'S COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING LITERACY OUTCOMES

As the state education agency, OSSE plays a critical role in ensuring that teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to support students in becoming competent, confident and joyful readers.

Learn More:

osse.dc.gov/page/literacy-dc

