

Understanding the Neurodivergent Student:

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that affects word reading, spelling and/or decoding. It is primarily neurobiological, which means that the condition stems from differences in the structure and function of the brain, particularly in regions involved in processing reading and language. Since children do not grow out of it, early intervention is key to helping them thrive.¹



Facts About Dyslexia¹

Up to 1 in 5

children has dyslexia.

80–90%

of children with learning disorders have dyslexia.

Boys and girls

Dyslexia affects boys and girls equally.





Key Traits of an Individual with Dyslexia^{1,2}

While dyslexia can range in severity, here are some common traits:

The two areas impacted are:

- Difficulty sounding out letters and recognizing words
- Delay in speech, including learning songs and rhymes
- Challenges following directions, taking notes and/or copying from the board
- Lack of reading fluency

Students with dyslexia may also present numerous strengths, such as:³

- Fluid reasoning and problem-solving
- Oral language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, vocabulary, grammar)
- Creative thinking
- An aptitude for math

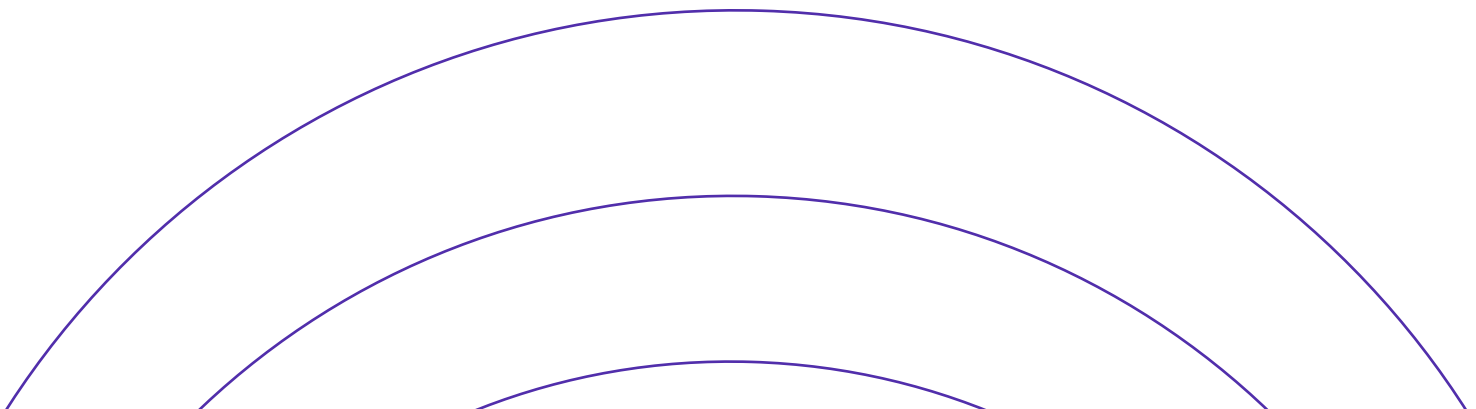


Supports that Help Students with Dyslexia

Effective school-based supports for dyslexia help build critical language skills as well as self-confidence. These supports can also benefit all students.

Some support options to consider include:^{1,4}

- Repeated readings of text in small group, paired or one-on-one options
- Mini lessons where students can “unpack” challenging words by sound
- Opportunities to read many different types of texts, focusing on decodability, as well as topics that interest the student(s)
- Multiple exposures of common words to boost familiarity
- Options for listening to audiobooks or typing instead of writing
- A quiet space to work
- A focus on celebrating small wins and accomplishments, with encouragement that recognizes strengths and hard work





Resources to Help Students with Dyslexia

Wondering how you can better support students with dyslexia?

Here are some resources to consult:



Your state department of education's dyslexia website, for state-based resources and learning opportunities



The Reading League, a national advocacy organization for evidence-based reading instruction



Decoding Dyslexia, a network of parent-led grassroots movements organized by state



Pearson's Dyslexia page, which offers a variety of training and other resources, including a product toolkit for professionals serving students at risk for dyslexia.

"For years, the common language of *disability* suggested something broken that needed to be fixed. But now we understand that these are *differences* to be understood and supported."

Kara Canale

Certified school psychologist and clinical assessment consultant at Pearson



Sources:

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2. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2024/02/decoding-dyslexia>
3. <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/content/dam/school/global/clinical/us/assets/shaywitz/dyslexia-toolkit-white-paper.pdf>
4. https://www.aft.org/ae/fall2023/vaughn_fletcher