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Symptoms of Dyslexia

Screening Checklist

by Marie Rippel

Symptoms of Dyslexia

Following is a list of dyslexia symptoms. Displaying just some of these symptoms does not automatically mean that a child has dyslexia. However, if many of these symptoms are displayed, the child may have dyslexia.

Reading problems

- Oral reading is choppy, not fluent and smooth.
- Reads words in the wrong order.
- Skips small words such as *a, the, to, of, were,* and *from*.
- Recognizes a word on one page but not on the next page.
- Inserts extra letters in a word when reading. For example, may read *tail* as *trail*. The misread word often has the same beginning and ending letter.
- Deletes letters in a word when reading. For example, may read *sag* instead of *sang*. Again, the misread word often has the same beginning and ending letter.
- Switches the order of letters in a word. For example, may read *mug* as *gum*.
- Substitutes words with similar meanings when reading stories. For example, may read *said* instead of *shouted*.
- Substitutes similar-looking words, such as *house* for *horse*.
- Ignores punctuation when reading.
- Makes up part of the story based on the illustrations or context clues instead of reading the actual words on the page.
- Loses place on the page, skips lines, or rereads lines.
- Reads at a level substantially below that of peers.
- Poor reading comprehension.
- Difficulty reading single words on a flashcard.
- Is fatigued after reading for a short time.

Spelling problems

- Inserts extra letters in a word when spelling. For example, may write *tail* as *trail*. The misspelled word often has the same beginning and ending letter.
- Deletes letters in a word when spelling. For example, may write *caft* instead of *craft*. Again, the misspelled word often has the same beginning and ending letter.
- Switches the order of letters in a word. For example, may write *speical* instead of *special*.
- Has difficulty copying words from another paper or the board. Copies letter by letter, referring to the original copy for almost every letter.
- Messy papers, including many crossed-out or erased words.
- Misspells many common words like *said*, *there*, and *does*.
- May be able to spell the words on a spelling test after much studying, but then misspells the same words outside of spelling class.

Sequencing problems

Dyslexics often have difficulty with sequencing (remembering a sequence). This leads to symptoms such as:

- Difficulty remembering the entire alphabet.
- Difficulty following instructions that have more than one step.
- Difficulty remembering the days of the week and months of the year.
- Difficulty remembering phone numbers.
- Difficulty following spoken instructions.

Handwriting problems

Many dyslexics also have **dysgraphia**, which is a developmental disability that makes it difficult to master handwriting. Dysgraphia can be related in part to sequencing difficulties and in part to fine-motor control.

- Slow, laborious writing.
- Irregularly shaped letters.
- Improper pencil grip.
- Dominant hand isn't established until later than peers. May switch from right to left hand while writing or coloring until after age 7 or 8.
- May write letters in the wrong direction. For example, instead of writing an o in a counterclockwise direction, child may write it in a clockwise direction. Instead of starting the letter l at the top, child may start the letter from the bottom.
- Confuses letters with a similar shape, especially the pairs b-d, m-w, and n-u.
- Improper use of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Poor spacing between letters, words, and sentences.
- Handwriting looks "childlike" even into the teen years.

Different people can have different signs and symptoms of dyslexia. There is a wide variation, and the symptoms can range from mild to severe.

It's important to note that a child can have many of these symptoms without actually being dyslexic. If a systematic phonics method was not used, the child may simply lack the skills necessary to read and write fluently.

In the vast majority of cases, when students are taught using the multisensory approach used by *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling*, the symptoms of dyslexia completely disappear.

Teaching Students with Dyslexic Symptoms

All About Reading and *All About Spelling* take the struggle out of learning for students with dyslexia and other learning differences. Our programs are easy to learn and easy to teach!

- Multisensory, Orton-Gillingham approach
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