

DYSLEXIA QUESTION AND ANSWER

Moraga School District

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WHAT IS DYSLEXIA

- Language Based Disability
 - Neurobiological
 - Characterized by difficulties with word recognition, poor spelling and decoding
 - Unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities
 - Lack of response to good classroom instruction
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RESULT OF DIFFICULTIES IN:

- Breaking down sounds in language and connecting to alphabet symbol (*Phonological Dyslexia*)
 - Keeping sounds in memory while decoding (Working Memory; Phonological Memory)
 - Remembering words by sight. Memorizing words that can't be sounded out and don't follow the rules of phonics. (*Surface Dyslexia*)
 - Rapid Naming (*Rapid Naming Deficit*) - Linked to reading speed and processing speed
 - Phonological Awareness and Rapid Naming (*Double Deficit Dyslexia*)
 - Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word breaks, etc. (Orthography)
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PARENT QUESTION:

I have a 15 year old recently diagnosed with Dyslexia. Dyslexia still seems to be a dirty word that the schools don't like to use, ADD and ADHD are openly addressed by Dyslexia is lumped into the category of "Other learning disability." It's my understanding that AB1369 was supposed to address this issue but it doesn't seem to be implemented. What are your thoughts on this issue?

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/dyslexia.asp>

DYSLEXIA AND SCHOOLS

- AB 1369 (The Frazier Bill)
 - Students with dyslexia that meet IDEA criteria as having a specific learning disability, are entitled to special education and related services
 - CA Dyslexia Guidelines issued August 14, 2017
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/dyslexia.asp>
 - Include “phonological processing” in the description of basic psychological processes

PARENT QUESTION:

How is a dyslexia diagnosis made? And what are the concrete steps to be taken in order to help the child with dyslexia succeed at school?

DSM-5 AND IDEA

DSM-V (Private Practice) –

- Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in reading (Word reading accuracy, reading rate or fluency, reading comprehension)
- “Note: Dyslexia is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities...”
- Current severity: Mild, Moderate, Severe

IDEA (School Districts) –

- Specific Learning Disability – “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Including conditions such as perceptual disability, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia” that adversely affects a student’s educational performance.”
- Specific learning disability do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage; limited English proficiency; or lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math.

CONCRETE STEPS TO HELP AT SCHOOL

Ongoing

- Meeting with teacher – Shared Concerns?
- School based interventions of support (Tiered approach)
- Ongoing informal assessment – Improvement? If not, why?
- Student Study Team – What more can be done?
- Formal Assessment
- Sequential, Multisensory, Individualized approach – Research Based
- Ongoing informal assessment – Improvement? If not, why?

PARENT QUESTION:

What types of specific supports do you recommend to help middle school children with surface dyslexia with decoding and spelling when reading and writing?

INSTRUCTION

- Explicit
 - Multisensory
 - Specific
 - Individualized
 - Research Based
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SURFACE DYSLEXIA INTERVENTION IN MS

- What intervention is in place at the school at this time?
- Practice small groups of words until they are recognizable
- Learning Ally – See it while hearing it
- Multisensory Instruction – Writing letters in air, writing letters in sand
- Orton Gillingham, Barton, Wilson, Lindamood-Bell
- Assistive Technology – Is there a need for AT?
- Consider the need for Accommodations and AT: No cold calling, or offer the option to pass; seating next to quiet peers (many dyslexics are sensitive to sound); Multiple choice options on tests (recognition is easier than retrieval); Testing in quiet place; Give student copies of class notes to follow along with during class; SnapType app at home to avoid filling out by hand; Text to speech
- If writing is an issue consider: Writing assignments on Google Docs with Grammarly and/or Google Read & Write extensions

PARENT QUESTION:

How do we get our child tested for dyslexia?

ASSESSMENT

- Requesting assessment from the school district
 - What does the classroom teacher think?
 - Calling a Student Study Team meeting
 - Does the student have a suspected disability and is she in need of specialized services?
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PARENT QUESTION:

Is it recommended to have dyslexia diagnosed beyond school assessments that indicate dyslexia?

PRIVATE ASSESSMENT

- Is the initial evaluation comprehensive and does it clearly define your child's learning profile related to reading?
 - Is your assessment team expert in dyslexia assessment?
 - Is the recommended intervention working? If not, why not?
 - Is more testing the answer, or are resources better spent on the intervention?
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PARENT QUESTION:

What specific interventions do you endorse as an intervention for dyslexia? (beyond OG/Wilson?)

MY EXPERIENCE WITH DYSLEXIA

- Programs attempted – Why they did and did not work for my child
- What I have learned:
 - Expert Teacher
 - Staying on top of the child's progress – Ongoing collaboration and feedback
 - If progress is not being made, figure out why.
 - Are there other factors interfering with progress? Attention? Anxiety? Teacher issues? Student grouping issues?
 - What is the best match for the student –During school? After school?
 - For the severe dyslexic, intervention can take years to remediate.

PARENT QUESTION:

What is the school's obligation to provide technology for students that have technology accommodations in the IEP? (e.g., Provide chrome book for school use and homework).

SCHOOLS OBLIGATION

- The IEP team determines the student's assistive technology needs through an assessment process.
 - The IEP documents what the student needs are according to the assessment.
 - The school team is responsible for implementing the IEP as written.
 - AT needs are an ongoing consideration as part of the IEP.
 - If the IEP is not being followed, notify your case manager and request an IEP meeting.
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PARENT QUESTION:

Will you cover stealth dyslexia?

STEALTH DYSLEXIA

- Difficulty with phonics and decoding
 - Reading comprehension within normal limits or above
 - MRI results – Dyslexic brain
 - Compensate with attention and problem solving skills (EF)
 - Difficulties in reading new words, reading aloud, silent reading speed and accuracy, spelling and writing.
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PARENT QUESTIONS:

How do you help with difficulties with written expression, getting ideas onto paper? My child feels like he has permanent writer's block even though he verbally has great ideas and has access to AT (Google Read Write)? Would therapy help? Are there private workshops in the area?

DIFFICULTIES GETTING THOUGHTS ONTO PAPER

- Specific Programs – Athena and Charles Armstrong input
- Executive Functioning support
- Mapping Software - Coggle (Google Inspiration or Kidspiration)
- Pixton – Comic writing website
- Writing Workshops

PARENT QUESTION:

I've heard that learning a foreign language can be hard for dyslexics and that some students opt out of the requirement or take sign language instead. What are your thoughts on that and how might this impact college admissions?

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

- Learning a foreign language is harder for students with dyslexia
- High School Student with Dyslexia - Example

PARENT QUESTION:

I'm curious what are your thoughts about college applications and whether or not it is a good idea to reveal that you are dyslexic in the application?

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

- Looking for a match
- Some schools are stronger than others
- University Website – Look up “Disability Services” – Office of Disability Services
- <https://www.bestcollegesonline.com/blog/20-incredible-colleges-for-special-needs-students/>
- Look at me and what I have overcome!

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Prevalence
 - Reversals are NOT due to seeing it differently
 - Along a Continuum
 - Runs in Families
 - Dyslexics need the rules of language explicitly taught
 - Dyslexia is not dysgraphia (break down in writing) or dyscalculia (breakdown in math)
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MYTHS

- You cannot identify dyslexia until age 9 or third grade
 - Dyslexia is not a specific learning disorder
 - Students should only be taught compensatory strategies after age 9
 - You cannot have dyslexia if you are cognitively gifted
 - Dyslexia involves transposing letters and letter reversals
 - Dyslexia can be cured through visual tracking therapy and/or the use of color overlays
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FOR THE ASSESSMENT TEAM....

- Questions to ask during assessment: Is there a family history of dyslexia? History of ear infections? Difficulties telling left from right? Difficulties with sense of direction? Early speech and language needs?
 - Assess: Phonological Awareness, Phonological/Language Based Memory, Rapid Naming, Letter & Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension, Silent Reading Fluency, Nonsense Word Decoding, Writing and Spelling
 - Oral Reading
 - Classroom assessments – F&P
 - Report Cards – Kindergarten, 1st, etc
 - High School – Difficulties with foreign language?
 - Observation during Language Arts
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ASSESSMENT TEAM (CONTINUED)

- Cognitive measures statistically associated with dyslexia: Phonological Awareness, Phonological Coding, Rapid Automatic Naming, Auditory Verbal Working Memory; Processing Speed; Long term storage and retrieval: Associative Memory; and Orthographic Processing.
- Fluid Reasoning and Oral Language are possible cognitive strengths
- Analyze timed measures and student self report for effort for accommodations

THANK YOU!

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