

4D

Guidelines/ Indicators of Dyslexia

- Use these indicators to determine if a student exhibits “dyslexic type tendencies”
- Notice tendencies and Adjust teaching and classroom environment
- Discuss with parents
- Consult with specialist as necessary


**Dyslexia
Foundation**
of New Zealand

Recognition • Understanding • Action

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Pre-school Checklist

At this stage, children are developing the oral language skills necessary for learning to read, spell and write. They are learning about the sounds of language and starting to notice letters.

- Speech that is difficult to understand
- Difficulty remembering letters in his or her own name
- Difficulty learning nursery rhymes
- Difficulty remembering and following instructions
- Does not sit alone and look at books, does not turn one page at a time, does not know how to open and hold books
- Has persistent jumbled phrases, e.g. 'cobbler's club' for 'toddler's club'
- Use of substitute words e.g. 'lampshade' for 'lamppost'
- Difficulty in naming people and objects
- Difficulty learning rhyming words, e.g. 'cat, mat, sat'
- Delayed speech compared to peers
- Persistent difficulties in getting dressed and putting shoes on the correct feet
- Enjoys being read to but shows no interest in letters or words
- Often seems to be not listening or paying attention
- Excessive tripping, bumping into things and falling over
- Dislikes jigsaw puzzles or finds them difficult
- May dislike drawing (fine motor skill avoidance)
- Meeting some childhood milestones easily but consistently behind on others

Years 1 and 2 Checklist

At this stage, children are learning to read. They are continuing to learn about sounds and word parts and they are learning about letter-sound correspondences. They are also learning how to write letters and words.

- Cannot separate words into their individual sounds (e.g., dog has 3 sounds - /d/, /o/, and /g/)
- Has difficulty with letter-sound correspondences (learning the sound 'sss' goes with the letter S)
- Reads words with no connection to the letters on the page
- Relies heavily on the pictures in a story to "read"
- Has difficulty remembering basic sight words
- Has difficulty sounding out one-syllable words (e.g., dog, hop, bat, etc.)
- Says that they do not like to read and complains about how hard it is to do
- Avoids reading
- Has poor concentration on reading tasks
- Does not know that we read words from left to right
- Has difficulty spelling simple words like 'it' and 'the'
- Has difficulty with pencil grip
- Poor short-term memory

Years 3 and 4 Checklist

Children at this stage understand that the sounds in our language correspond to the letters on the page. They can read and write more complicated words and text. They move from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”.

- Difficulty pronouncing or reading long, complicated words
- Omits grammatical endings in reading and/or writing (-s, -ed, -ing, etc.)
- Difficulty remembering spelling words over time and learning spelling rules, may know a word one day but not the next
- Exhibits many pauses or hesitations when talking
- Uses many filter words such as “stuff” or “things” instead of the proper name of objects when talking
- Needs extra time to formulate sentences
- Has difficulty telling a story in sequential order
- Has difficulty remembering dates, phone numbers, names, random facts
- Is slow in acquiring reading skills
- Has no strategies for word attack (figuring out how to sound out a word)
- Makes wild guesses and stabs at words
- Difficulties reading “functional” words (e.g., for, with, this)
- Has messy handwriting
- Puts letters and figures the wrong way round
- Leaves letters out of words or puts them in the wrong order
- Still confuses ‘b’ and ‘d’ and words such as ‘no/on’
- Still needs to use fingers to make simple calculations
- Poor concentration
- Has problems understanding what he/she has read
- Takes longer than average to do written work
- Problems processing language at speed
- Cannot separate compound words into two words (eg. rainbow - rain and bow)
- Begins to exhibit self-doubt

Years 5 to 8 Checklist

At this stage, students have mastered reading and spelling rules are now expected to learn new information from reading.

- Has a significant difficulty reading and spelling multisyllabic words, often omitting entire syllables as well as making single sound errors
- Has a lack of awareness of word structure (e.g., prefixes, roots, suffixes)
- Frequently misreads common sight words (e.g., where, there, what, then, when, the, etc.)
- Difficulties with reading comprehension and learning new information from text
- Difficulty learning new vocabulary
- Problems with spelling
- Difficulties organising ideas for writing
- Avoids reading for pleasure
- Is not smooth or fluent when reading
- Avoids reading aloud
- Oral reading lacks inflection and is monotone
- Fails to attend to punctuation when reading
- Needs to have instructions repeated
- Gets 'tied up' using long words
- Confuses places, times, dates
- Has difficulty processing complex language or long series of instructions at speed
- Does not perform well on written, timed tests
- Does better on oral exams than written
- Lacks confidence and self-esteem

Secondary School and Adult Checklist

Students and adults at this stage are expected to analyze and synthesize information in written form as well as acquire factual information.

- Difficulty with automatic word identification that can significantly affect acquisition of knowledge
- Slow rate of reading persists
- Difficulty with spelling and written composition
- Difficulty with note taking in class or lectures
- Difficulty organizing projects and completing assignments on time
- Has poor confidence and self-esteem
- Has areas of particular strength as well as persistent weaknesses
- Does not perform well in written tests
- Takes longer to process information
- Performance discrepancy between subjects
- Does not perform well under time pressure
- Performs better when given oral instructions
- Prefers conversation to email
- Often prefers practical tasks

All Ages Checklist

Individuals with dyslexia show unique patterns of strengths and weaknesses.

- Special talents in mechanical abilities, music, art, drama, sport, or creative writing
- May have strong visual spatial abilities, but some may exhibit left/right confusion and difficulties with concepts related to time and space
- May have strong mathematical skills, but some may have difficulty memorizing math facts and solving word problems
- Difficulty with handwriting
- Difficulties with co-ordination
- Takes longer to process information
- Does not perform to ability when under time pressure