

## How can kids with dyslexia learn to read?

The use of **systematic phonics instruction** is the key to teaching dyslexic students how to read. This approach includes:

- **Phonemic awareness:** Instruction in identifying sounds in spoken words and then applying them to written words.
- **Phonics:** Moving step-by-step through letter-sound patterns, from the most common and consistent to harder and less consistent ones. Instruction should be provided until the student has mastered each skill.
- **Practice:** After a phonics pattern is introduced in a lesson, students should be provided reading materials that contain those same patterns.
- **Repetition:** Kids with dyslexia need a lot of practice to master phonics, including decoding, writing, and using the word in a sentence.
- **Multisensory teaching:** Learning is reinforced by hearing words, seeing them, saying them, and writing them — and also through gestures and movements.

## Emotional support for kids with dyslexia

Children with dyslexia often find school frustrating, and may act out. Struggling in school can be hard on their self-esteem. They need to be reassured that they're just as smart as other kids. Helping them get involved in activities in which they can excel will boost their self-confidence. If they are showing signs of depression or anxiety, it's important to get them treatment along with support for their learning challenges.

## School accommodations for kids with dyslexia

In addition to explicit, targeted instruction, kids with dyslexia are entitled to supportive tools that can help them in the classroom, such as:

- Extra time on tests
- Test directions read out loud
- A quiet space to work
- The option to record lectures and/or access to class notes
- Audiobooks or text-to-speech devices
- The option to give verbal, rather than written, answers
- Not having to read out loud in class
- Exemption from foreign language learning



For more resources on dyslexia in English and Spanish, visit the Child Mind Institute's Family Resource Center at [childmind.org/resources](https://childmind.org/resources)

The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders by giving them the help they need to thrive. We've become the leading independent nonprofit in children's mental health by providing gold-standard evidence-based care, delivering educational resources to millions of families each year, training educators in underserved communities, and developing tomorrow's breakthrough treatments.

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# Dyslexia in Kids: Quick Facts

Symptoms of dyslexia and tips  
for supporting dyslexic children  
and teenagers



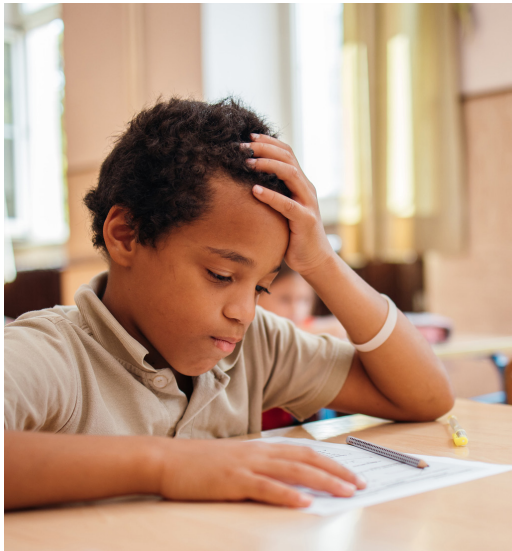
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## What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a common learning disability that involves trouble with reading. Children with dyslexia are just as intelligent as other kids, but they struggle to pick up reading skills, including decoding (sounding out words), recognizing common words, and spelling. With the right support they can learn to read successfully, but it may never be easy for them, and people with dyslexia often compensate by using other strategies to get information.

## How common is dyslexia?

It's estimated that as many as one in five children have dyslexia. Experts used to think that dyslexia was more common in boys than girls, but current research shows no gender differences.



## What are the signs that a child is dyslexic?

Although signs of dyslexia can show up when children are young, it is usually not diagnosed until school age, when they struggle to pick up reading skills. Some kids with dyslexia manage to keep up until about third grade, when they are expected to be able to read often and fluently in all subjects. This is when it's often said that the focus switches from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Young children may show symptoms of dyslexia before they begin school. These include:

- Talking later than other children
- Trouble remembering words
- Difficulty telling left from right
- Trouble following directions
- Not being able to remember rhymes

In the classroom, a child with dyslexia may find it difficult to:

- Connect sounds with letters
- Put sounds in the right order
- Sound out new words
- Remember common sight words
- Spell words correctly
- Remember math facts
- Read letters and numbers in the right order
- Learn a new language
- Take notes
- Read aloud in class

Outside of school, a child with dyslexia may struggle with:

- Understanding signs or logos
- Learning the rules to games
- Following directions
- Telling time
- Frustration leading to emotional outbursts
- Communicating with other kids



## How is dyslexia diagnosed?

Professionals who can diagnose dyslexia include:

- Reading specialists
- Speech and language therapists
- Educational evaluators
- Psychologists
- Neuropsychologists

They will conduct an evaluation that confirms a deficit in reading ability and rules out other possible causes for the deficit. Usually, kids must wait until they are school-aged (or have had significant early reading instruction) to get an accurate assessment.