

## How Can You Identify Dyslexia?

The first step in getting help with dyslexia is to identify it. Students who are not doing as well in school as expected are good candidates for testing.

While there is no single test for diagnosing dyslexia, a thorough assessment involves a series of tests—cognitive, language, social, emotional and academic.

Professionals can identify how individuals learn by performing a comprehensive evaluation, focusing on:

- Background Information
- Cognitive/Intellectual Ability
- Specific Language Skills
- Listening Comprehension
- Academic Evaluation
- Phonemic Awareness

Some of the more common characteristics of dyslexia are listed below:

### Early Warning Signs

- Delayed speech & articulation problems
- Phoneme confusion
- Difficulty with directionality
- Lack of dominant handedness
- Difficulty learning alphabet, numbers, days, months, time
- Delayed vocabulary growth
- Poor ability to follow oral directions

### Critical Warning Signs

- Weak phonemic awareness
- Difficulty with:
  - rhyming
  - segmenting
  - blending
  - distinguishing sounds in words or in isolated letters
- Tendency to insert or delete a sound in a word

### Difficulties in Reading

- Slow and labored reading
- Inaccurate oral reading
- Poor decoding (reversals, omissions, substitutions, additions, phoneme confusion)
- Not fluent
- Ignores or changes small words
- Deletes or changes suffixes
- Tires easily
- Reading comprehension compromised

### **Difficulties in Spelling**

- Reverses, transposes and rotates letters
- Deletes and add letters
- Persistent misspellings of common non-phonetic words such as "they" or "where"
- Errors in copying
- Level of oral vocabulary not evident in writing

### **Difficulties in Handwriting**

- Unusual and tight pencil grip
- Writing letters is slow and labored
- Poor letter formations, spacing and alignment of letters and words

### **Difficulties in Written Expression**

- Writing is slow and labored
- Numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar
- Organizing thoughts and getting thoughts to paper are difficult
- Easily overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks required to write

### **Difficulties in Math**

- Solving word problems
- Mastering math facts
- Poor number formations, misaligned numbers, number reversals, insertions, deletions and transposing digits
- Number sequencing
- Remembering the sequence of steps to solve a problem
- Physical and temporal directionality
- Processing confusion
- Visual discrimination of numbers and signs, such as 6 and 9 or 2 and 5
- Poor visual tracking
- Auditory discrimination of numbers, such as 13 and 30 or 15 and 50
- Errors in copying from the board

### **General Difficulties**

- Learning time concepts and time management skills
- Study and organization skills
- Following directions
- Sequencing
- Processing language
- Word-retrieval
- Short-term to long-term memory

## **Social Difficulties**

- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty with interpreting nonverbal cues
- Difficulty with making and keeping friends
- Misunderstanding figurative language
- Poor social judgment
- Weak problem solving /coping skills
- Difficulty in accepting changes in routine
- Low self-esteem
- High-risk for depression