

The purpose of this information area is to answer frequently asked questions concerning how students who may exhibit characteristics of dyslexia are served within the GRISD. The guidelines and procedures adopted have been designed to correlate to the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia and related disorders adopted by the State Board of Education in 1992, mandated by the state of Texas, and presented in [The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders](#)

The Dyslexia Handbook was developed to satisfy two statutes and one rule addressing dyslexia and related disorders. Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders, mandates testing students for dyslexia, and providing instruction for students with dyslexia. It gives the State Board of Education authority to adopt rules and standards to administer testing and instruction. Furthermore, Chapter 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 74.28 outlines the responsibilities of districts as to delivery of services to students with dyslexia. § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 establishes assessment and evaluation standards and procedures for students. If a student's dyslexia is determined to 'substantially limit' learning, then Section 504 procedures are put into place.

Glen Rose ISD is committed to supporting all students to ensure educational success. Dyslexia support services are provided on all district campuses K-12.

What are possible difficulties my child is experiencing that might be associated with dyslexia?

The following difficulties may be associated with dyslexia if they are unexpected for the individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities:

- difficulty with the development of phonological awareness and phonological processing skills (Processing the sounds of speech), including segmenting or breaking spoken words into individual sounds;
- difficulty accurately decoding nonsense or unfamiliar words;
- difficulty reading single words in isolation;
- inaccurate and labored oral reading;
- lack of reading fluency;
- variable degrees of difficulty with reading comprehension;
- variable degrees of difficulty learning the names of letters and their associated sounds;
- difficulty learning to spell;
- difficulty in word finding and rapid naming;
- variable difficulty with aspects of written composition;
- difficulty with learning and reproducing the alphabet in correct sequence (in either oral or written form); and
- family history of similar problems.

The difficulty of the child identified as having dyslexia is in reading, single-word decoding, reading fluency, reading comprehension, written composition, and spelling. The problems of the child with a learning disorder may include these difficulties and other difficulties that do not necessarily pertain to reading exclusively.

What process is used to determine educational need for dyslexia assessment?

The campus student support team determines whether there is an educational need for dyslexia assessment. Recommendation for dyslexia assessment should be based on the educational need of the student as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook* published by the Texas Education Agency.

When does Glen Rose ISD assess students for possible dyslexia intervention?

Students will be assessed after the campus student support team determines there is an educational need, tiered interventions have been implemented, and students' responses documented. Any student who may move into the district after the school year has started and has participated in or been previously assessed for dyslexia may require additional assessment upon entry to school.

What information is used to determine if a child should receive dyslexia services?

Both informal and formal assessments are evaluated in the decision-making process. A parent interview, classroom teacher checklist, samples of classroom work, and informal assessments conducted by the campus dyslexia teachers are all examples of informal pieces of information that are collected. Formal assessments conducted by the campus dyslexia teachers include the areas of phonemic awareness, letter ID, rapid naming of words, decoding words both real and nonsense, reading comprehension, and fluency/rate of reading.

Who ultimately identifies and makes placement decisions for students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia?

Members of the district's dyslexia team comprised of the campus dyslexia teachers and the dyslexia coordinator review all collected data to determine if the student is exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia. Program placement is determined by either the 504 or ARD committee.

How long will my child receive direct dyslexia instruction?

The dyslexia curriculum is written for a two-year time frame. Each student's program is delivered through daily, small group instruction. Student progress is monitored by the dyslexia teacher. Possible length of time in the program may fluctuate from child to child depending on individual factors such as extended illness, excessive absences, and progress made within the curriculum.

What factors are used to determine when a child EXITS from dyslexia intervention?

The following factors may be used to determine when a child exits from dyslexia intervention: (1) completion of curriculum; (2) student demonstrating success in grade level material; (3) passing STAAR; (4) recommendation by the dyslexia teacher; (5) parent request; (6) moved from GRISD; and (7) lack of appropriate progress within the dyslexia curriculum.

How will my child be supported once they have exited from their daily dyslexia instruction?

Campus dyslexia teachers track students who have exited the dyslexia program for a period of time. Tracking is a way to support teachers and students within the classroom setting. This tracking can look different for each student depending on the student's needs. Tracking can take the form of checking the student's grades each six/nine weeks, talking to classroom teacher(s) and/or meeting with the individual student informally, etc.

What kind of support is available for my student at the secondary level?

A dyslexia teacher is available to support students on middle school and high school campuses. Students are enrolled in a dyslexia class that is scheduled within the regular school day and is different from the regular reading/language arts curriculum. Dyslexia teachers are encouraged to use their expertise to deliver instruction designed to help students transition their learned skills into regular education classes. A primary goal of dyslexia intervention is to promote independent problem-solving behavior. Reinforcement of such behavior during daily dyslexia classes helps the student transition this into his/her other regular education curriculum.

What kind of support is available for my child at the elementary level?

For students in grades K-5th who struggle with reading and writing, there are interventions that might be available outside of the classroom environment. For example, students may receive additional help through prescriptive tutoring or Leveled Literacy Instruction. Accelerated reading instruction and tutoring are possibilities for students who are experiencing difficulty within the general classroom setting. Decisions to participate in these interventions are made when students demonstrate an educational need.

Who delivers instruction for students showing characteristics of dyslexia?

A teacher who has received extensive training in an alphabetic multi-sensory program will provide the curriculum for students.

Who can I contact at my child's campus concerning the dyslexia program?

Contact the campus dyslexia teacher before/after school or during his/her conference period. Call the campus office to find out when the teacher is available within the school day for questions concerning the dyslexia program.

How does Glen Rose ISD address students who have participated in a dyslexia program in another district?

All prior educational history including any previous interventions, assessment results, and past grade level performance information are collected upon a student's enrollment in GRISD. That information is reviewed to evaluate what, if any, additional information might be needed in order to make an appropriate decision concerning student placement. The student's educational need will determine any program intervention.

My child is currently participating in another intervention. Is it possible that he will receive reading support through the district's dyslexia program?

Glen Rose ISD offers several interventions to support student success. Whenever children are placed into these interventions, it is done so with multiple considerations in mind: (1) what will benefit the child, and (2) what intervention is offered that will be delivered in the least restrictive environment.

How will I be updated on my child's progress in the dyslexia program?

Your child's dyslexia teacher will arrange for parent conferences as necessary to discuss your child's progress within the dyslexia curriculum. Parents can request a conference as well. Conferences will usually be scheduled before/after the school day or during the teacher's daily planning period. In addition to conferences, a district-wide parent meeting is held during the year. This meeting will focus on various topics surrounding dyslexia that can help parents learn more about their child's learning disability and how to help support their child both at school and in the home environment. Letters, flyers posted on campuses, and the Glen Rose ISD website are avenues through which upcoming district/campus meetings are distributed.

How can I be involved in supporting my child's dyslexia intervention?

Upon entry into the dyslexia program, parents will receive a Dyslexia Parent Handbook from the child's dyslexia teacher. This handbook is designed to offer parents information about dyslexia as well as tips and suggestions for creating a positive home reading environment. In addition, a selected reading list for parents and children as well as a list of web resources is included. There are numerous ways parents may participate in daily support of their child's dyslexia program. Providing a safe, risk-free environment at home can eliminate anxiety that a child might experience when homework is being completed. Consistency in completion of daily homework, building your child's self-esteem by supporting daily learning, and helping to establish an independent attitude will benefit your child not only during dyslexia intervention but also throughout his/her life as he/she learns how to be a successful learner.

Dyslexia Services

Mastering the ability to read, spell, and write is fundamental to achieving academic success. Students with dyslexia struggle with those skills despite receiving the same classroom instruction that benefits most students and having adequate intelligence.

The Houston Independent School District is committed to providing students identified with dyslexia with instruction that is individualized, intensive, and includes phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components as outlined in the Texas Education Agency's [Dyslexia Handbook](#).

Dyslexia Definition

The International Dyslexia Association Definition of Dyslexia

Most current definition: Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

- *Adopted by the IDA Board, November 12, 2002.*
- *This definition is also used by the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2002.*

Let's break it down:

Specific learning disability – research has indicated specific cognitive characteristics related to dyslexia.

...**that is neurological in origin** – dyslexia results from differences in how the brain processes information. Specifically, functional brain imaging has demonstrated a failure of the left hemisphere posterior brain systems to function properly during reading.

More information:

- [National Center for the Study of Adult Learning & Literacy](#)

Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities – students with dyslexia will demonstrate difficulties identifying real words (word recognition) and pronouncing nonsense words (decoding); the student's ability to read fluently is also a major characteristic as well as difficulty with spelling. This is in contrast to the popularly held belief that the major characteristic is the reversal of letters, words and numbers.

These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language – making the connection between oral language and the letters/sounds that represent language in written form requires an awareness that all words can be decomposed into phonologic segments (i.e., the word bat can be broken down into three phonemes or individual sounds – b, a, and t). Research findings have been consistent in confirming that in young school-age children as well as in adolescents, *a deficit in phonology is the strongest and most specific finding related to dyslexia.*

That is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities – unexpected in relation to the student's: oral language skills, the ability to learn in the absence of print, intellectual functioning, or strong math skills in comparison to reading skills.

...and the provision of effective classroom instruction – if the child has been identified as at-risk for reading failure in kindergarten and first grade, have they been provided with effective instruction in order to develop proficient early reading skills? The lack of response to scientifically informed instruction is one factor that differentiates severe reading deficits from reading failure resulting from inadequate instruction. **Early intervention is critical**...students who receive appropriate instruction show changes in how their brain processes the information so that it resembles that of non-disabled readers. Research has found that effective early interventions have the capability of reducing the expected incidence of reading failure from 18% of the school age population to 1 – 5%.

Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge – because students with reading difficulties typically do not read the same amount as non-disabled readers, it may impact their vocabulary development as well as their exposure to information learned by reading.

[Source: *A Definition of Dyslexia* by G. Reid Lyon, Sally E. Shaywitz and Bennett A. Shaywitz; *Annals of Dyslexia*, Volume 53, 2003]

A few quick facts about dyslexia:

- The word dyslexia comes from the Greek language and means *poor language*.
- Dyslexia is a life-long status, however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life.
- Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or a desire to learn; with appropriate teaching methods dyslexics can learn successfully.
- Early identification and treatment is the key to helping dyslexics achieve in school and in life.

(Source: The International Dyslexia Association)

Dyslexia Characteristics

The following are the reading/spelling characteristics of dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading words in isolation;
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words;
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored);
- Difficulty spelling.

The reading/spelling characteristics are most often associated with the following:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness);
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds;
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory);
- Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming).

Consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension;
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language;
- Limited vocabulary growth do to reduced reading experiences.

For more information:

- Visit the International Dyslexia Association for answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- View/download the Texas Education Agency's [Dyslexia Handbook](#) (available in Spanish soon).

Just a few celebrities & other important figures with dyslexia:

- Erin Brokovich
- Stephen J. Cannell
- Cher
- Tom Cruise
- Thomas Edison
- Danny Glover

- Whoopi Goldberg
- Tommy Hilfiger
- Nolan Ryan
- Charles Schwab
- Jackie Stewart
- Henry Winkler
- *MANY more...*

(Source: *The International Dyslexia Association*)

Instructional Components

- **Instruction for Students with Dyslexia**

School districts may purchase a reading program or develop their own reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders as long as the **program is characterized by the descriptors** found in *The Dyslexia Handbook* [19 TAC §74.28(c)].

Descriptors related to evidence-based instructional components:

- **Phonological awareness** – "Phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal sound structure of words. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds. An important aspect of phonological awareness is the ability to segment spoken words into their component phonemes" (Birsh, 2011, p.19).
- **Sound-symbol association** – Sound-symbol association is the knowledge of the various speech sounds in any language to the corresponding letter or letter combinations that represent those speech sounds. The mastery of sound/symbol association (alphabetic principle) is the foundation for the ability to read (decode) and spell (encode) (Birsh, 2011, p.19). "Explicit phonics refers to an organized program in which these sound symbol correspondences are taught systematically" (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 53).
- **Syllabication** – "A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. The six basic types of syllables in the English language include the following: closed, open, vowel-e consonant-e, r-controlled, vowel pair (or vowel

- team), and consonant-le (or final stable syllable). Rules for dividing syllables must be directly taught in relation to the word structure" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Orthography** – Orthography is the written spelling patterns and rules in a given language. Students must be taught the regularity and irregularity of the orthographic patterns of a language in an explicit and systematic manner. The instruction should be integrated with phonology and sound-symbol knowledge.
 - **Morphology** – "Morphology is the study of how a base word, prefix, root, suffix (morphemes) combine to form words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a given Language" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
 - **Syntax** – "Syntax is the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar and sentence variation and affects choices regarding mechanics of a given language" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
 - **Reading comprehension** – Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader with the text to be comprehended and the specific purpose for reading. The reader's skill in reading comprehension depends upon the development of accurate and fluent word recognition, oral language development (especially vocabulary and listening comprehension), background knowledge, use of appropriate strategies to enhance comprehension and repair it if it breaks down, and the reader's interest in what he or she is reading and motivation to comprehend its meaning (Birsh, 2011, pp. 9 and 368; Snow, 2002).
 - **Reading fluency** – "Reading fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 52). Teachers can help promote fluency with several interventions that have proven successful in helping students with fluency (e.g., repeated readings, word lists, and choral reading of passages) (Henry, 2010, p. 104).

Descriptors related to instructional approaches:

- **Simultaneous, multisensory (VAKT)** – "Multisensory instruction utilizes all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile) simultaneously in order to enhance memory and learning" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). "Children are actively engaged in learning language concepts and other information, often by using their hands, arms, mouths, eyes, and whole bodies while learning" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58).
- **Systematic and cumulative** – "Systematic and cumulative instruction requires the organization of material follow order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest concepts and progress methodically to more difficult concepts. Each step must also be based on elements previously learned. Concepts taught must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Explicit instruction** – "Explicit instruction is explained and demonstrated by the teacher one language and print concept at a time, rather than left to discovery through incidental encounters with information. Poor readers do not learn that print represents speech simply from exposure to books or print" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). Explicit instruction is "an approach that involves direct instruction:

The teacher demonstrates the task and provides guided practice with immediate corrective feedback before the student attempts the task independently" (Mather & Wendling, 2012, p. 326).

- **Diagnostic teaching to automaticity** – "Diagnostic teaching is knowledge of prescriptive instruction that will meet individual student needs of language and print concepts. The teaching plan is based on continual assessment of the student's retention and application of skills" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19). "This teacher knowledge is essential for guiding the content and emphasis of instruction for the individual student" (Moats & Dakin, 2008, p. 58). "When a reading skill becomes automatic (direct access without conscious awareness), it is performed quickly in an efficient manner" (Berninger & Wolf, 2009, p. 70).
- **Synthetic instruction** – "Synthetic instruction presents the parts of any alphabetic language (morphemes) to teach how the word parts work together to form a whole (e.g., base word, derivative)" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).
- **Analytic instruction** – "Analytic instruction presents the whole (e.g., base word, derivative) and teaches how the whole word can be broken into its component parts (e.g., base word, prefix, root, and suffix)" (Birsh, 2011, p. 19).

Talking about dyslexia...

"For me, dyslexia is not a disability. The unique strengths and characteristics of dyslexia allow me to think 'outside the box'. Until I was taught the Orton Gillingham approach, I did not have the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills necessary for success."

— *Peter W. D. Wright, Attorney for children with Special Needs*

Accommodations

- Listed below are possible accommodations for the §504, or Admission, Review, Dismissal (ARD) Committee of Knowledgeable Persons to consider for a student with dyslexia. This is not an exclusive list.

Textbooks and Curriculum

Books/Reading

- Provide audiotapes/CDs of textbooks and have student follow the text while listening
- Provide summaries of chapters
- Use marker or highlighting tape to highlight important textbook sections
- Assign peer reading buddies
- Use colored transparency or overlay
- Review vocabulary prior to reading
- Provide preview questions

- Use videos/filmstrips related to the readings
- Provide a one-page summary and/or a review of important facts
- Do not require student to read aloud
- Talk through the material one-to-one after reading assignments

Curriculum

- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts
- Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words
- Substitute alternatives for written assignments (posters, oral/taped or video presentations, projects, collages, etc.)

Classroom Environment

- Provide a computer for written work
- Seat student close to teacher in order to monitor understanding
- Provide quiet during intense learning times

Instruction and Assignments

Directions

- Give directions in small steps and with as few words as possible
- Break complex direction into small steps—arrange in a vertical list format
- Read written directions to student, then model/demonstrate
- Accompany oral directions with visual clues
- Use both oral and written directions
- Ask student to repeat, check for understanding

Writing

- Use worksheets that require minimal writing
- Provide a “designated note taker;” photocopy another student’s or teacher’s notes
- Provide a print outline with videotapes and filmstrips
- Allow student to use a keyboard when appropriate
- Allow student to respond orally
- Grade only for content not spelling or handwriting
- Have student focus on a single aspect of a writing assignment (elaboration, voice, etc.)
- Allow student to dictate answer to essay questions
- Reduce copying tasks
- Reduce written work

Math

- Allow student to use a calculator without penalty
- Use visuals and concrete examples

- Use grid paper to help correctly line up math problems
- Present information in small increments and at a slower pace
- Take time to reteach if student is struggling to understand
- Read story problems aloud
- Break problems into smaller steps

Grading

- Provide opportunity to test orally
- Allow student to type responses
- Read test to student
- Evaluate oral performances more than written
- Avoid penalizing for spelling errors, reversals, etc.

Testing

- Go over directions orally
- Permit as much time as needed to complete tests; avoid timed testing
- Read test materials and allow oral responses
- Separate content from mechanics/conventions grade
- Provide typed test materials, not tests written in cursive
- Allow student to respond on tape, with a typewriter, or by dictating answers to a tutor for assessment
- Allow tests to be taken in a room with few distractions

Homework

- Reduce reading assignments; keep concepts that have been taught
- Accept work dictated by student to a parent/tutor
- Limit amount of time to spend on homework; have parents verify time spent on assignments

Talking about dyslexia...

"Never let dyslexia be an excuse for not achieving success. Chart your course and work to make your dreams a reality. Once you do that, there is nothing to ever hinder you."

— Carolyn McCarthy, Former member of U.S. House of Representatives

Books About Dyslexia

- **All Kinds of Minds** by Mel Levine, M.D.
- **Basic Facts About Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems** by Louisa Cook Moats, Karen E. Dakin
- **Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print—A Summary** by Marilyn Jager Adams
- **Dyslexia, Fluency, and the Brain** by Maryanne Wolf
- **Dyslexia: Theory and Practice of Instruction, Third Edition** by Diana Brewster Clark, Joanna Kellog Uhry
- **English Isn't Crazy!** by Diana Handbury King
- **Helping Children Overcome L.D.** by Gerome Rosner
- **Homework Without Tears: A Parent's Guide for Motivating Children To Do Homework and To Succeed in School** by Lee Canter, Lee Hausner
- **How Dyslexic Benny Became a Star: A Story of Hope for Dyslexic Children and Their Parents** by Joe Griffith
- **Informed Instruction for Reading Success: Foundations for Teacher Preparation** by The International Dyslexia Association
- **Josh: A Boy With Dyslexia** by Caroline Janover
- **Keeping A Head in School: A Student's Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders** by Mel Levine, M.D.
- **Learning Outside the Lines: Two Ivy League Students with Learning Disabilities and AdHD Give You the Tools for Academic Success and Educational Revolution** by Jonathan Mooney, David Cole
- **Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 3rd Edition** by Judith R. Birsh (Ed.)
- **My Name is Brain Brian** by Jeanne Betancourt
- **Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at An Level** by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.
- **Parenting a Struggling Reader** by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats
- **Proust and the Squid, The Story and Science of the Reading Brain** by Maryanne Wolf
- **Reading Assessment: Linking Language, Literacy, and Cognition** by Melissa Lee Farrall
- **Reading David: A Mother and Son's Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dyslexia** by Lissa Weinstein, Ph.D.
- **Revealing Minds: Assessing to Understand and Support Struggling Learners** by Craig Pohlman
- **Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know & Ways to Help** by Pricilla Vail
- **Speech to Print** by Louisa C. Moats
- **Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Make a Difference During the Early Years** by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats
- **The Difficult Child** by Stanley Turecki, M.D., Leslie Tonner
- **The Many Faces of Dyslexia** by Margaret Byrd Rawson
- **The Misunderstood Child: Understanding and Coping with Your Child's Learning Disability** by Larry B. Silver, M.D.
- **The Read Aloud Handbook** by Jim Trelease
- **The Source for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia** by Regina Richards
- **The Tuned-in, Turned-on Book about Learning Problems** by Marnell Hayes
- **The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research** by Peggy McCardle, Vinita Chhabra
- **The Worst Speller in Jr. High** by Caroline Janover, Rosemary Wellner
- **"What's Wrong with Me?" Learning Disabilities at Home and School** by Regina C Ricci