



Understanding Dyslexia

Ages 0-6



What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia, or difficulty with reading, is a common learning disability that is brain-based. It is not related to IQ. Instead, children with dyslexia have trouble understanding how sounds relate to letters, and this results in reading and spelling difficulties.

Children at risk for dyslexia benefit the most when difficulties are identified early, so they can get the support they need before the gap with their peers widens. It is also important to remember that every child has his or her own unique talents and strengths, even if reading is a challenge. There are many successful people with dyslexia, including the actress Whoopi Goldberg and poet William Butler Yeats!

How will I know if my child has dyslexia?

Parents or teachers may notice clues that could indicate risk for difficulty learning to read.

- Children with a family history of reading difficulties
- Children who are late talkers
- Difficulty with rhyming or word games, and remembering the names and sounds of letters
- Resistance to reading aloud at school or at home
- Behaviour problems at school such as aggression or not listening to the teacher
- School avoidance, such as a child who regularly feels ill on school days but improves on weekends

How can I help my child?

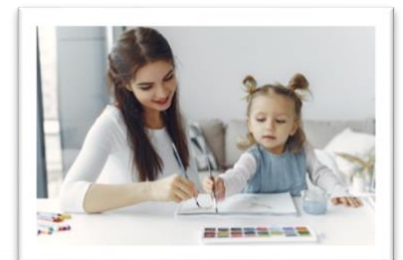
Advocacy

- Arrange an appointment with your doctor if you are concerned about language delay
- Children experiencing difficulty with language or reading should have hearing and vision tested; while such difficulties are not a basis for dyslexia, they are the means by which we learn to read
- If there is concern about dyslexia it is important to set up a meeting with your child's school to discuss the issue and find ways to work together to meet your child's needs
- Next steps may involve testing reading ability and developing an individualized plan to help
- More information about advocacy is available through the [Learning Disabilities Association of BC](#)

Helping at Home

Create a supportive home environment.

- Be patient with your child; avoid being critical of reading difficulties and find ways to remain positive about reading challenges
- Encourage other interests to help your child understand his or her own special gifts





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Encouraging Early Literacy

- Read aloud to your child daily to promote early literacy and build vocabulary
- Ask **open-ended questions** or connect the story to your child's life while you read together
- Provide books or magazines about topics that interest your child to foster a love of reading
- Suggestions for age-specific books for children with dyslexia can be found at **LoveReading4kids** or your local library

Instruction

Teachers are essential for providing skilled literacy instruction. Contact your child's teacher to see how you can support school-based instruction at home.

Phonological Awareness and Alphabet Knowledge

Preschool and school-aged children benefit from learning about the alphabet and developing phonological awareness, which is the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds, syllables and words in spoken language without print.

- Create opportunities for playing with the alphabet, such as singing the alphabet song and putting alphabet magnets on the fridge
- If your child is four or younger, play games with words, such as **clapping out syllables in words**
- If your child is older than four, play games **identifying sounds in words**, or **combining sounds to form a word**
- The **ABRACADABRA program** is a Canadian web-based program that children can use to develop a range of prereading and reading skills



Phonics

School-aged children benefit from learning phonics, which are the letter-sound relationships necessary to decode words. **BC Learning Centres for Children with Dyslexia** offers free Orton-Gillingham tutoring to help children with phonics.

Additional Resources

- **Reading Rockets**
- **Play Roly**
- **Talking is Teaching**
- **Understood**
- **Get Ready to Read!**
- **International Dyslexia Association**
- **LD Online**
- **Decoda Literacy Solutions**

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