

Characteristics of Dyslexia

Risk Factors and Characteristics of Dyslexia Across the Lifespan

Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia

Risk factors that may predict difficulty with word reading skills can be identified as early as preschool, and older students who are struggling to read words at a developmentally appropriate level continue to display specific characteristics. Understanding and responding to these risk factors and characteristics will support early identification for younger students, as well as identification and intervention for older students. A family history of problems with reading, spelling and writing is also a risk factor that should be considered.



PRESCHOOL - KINDERGARTEN

- Delay in talking; articulation problems
- Difficulty recognizing and producing rhymes
- Difficulty remembering written information, such as letter names (also phone number and address)
- Difficulty remembering and following directions
- Difficulty matching words by initial sound



GRADES 1 - 3

- Difficulty learning sound/symbol correspondences
- Persistent confusion of visually similar letters (b/d/p, w/m, h/n, f/t)
- Confusion of letters whose sounds are similar (d/t, b/p, f/v)
- Difficulty remembering basic sight vocabulary (e.g. colors)
- Problems segmenting words into individual sounds and blending sounds to form words
- Reading and spelling errors that involve difficulties with sequencing and monitoring sound/symbol correspondence such as reversals of letters (past/pats), omissions (tip/trip), additions (slip/sip), substitutions (rip/rib) and transpositions (stop/pots)
- Omission of grammatical endings in reading and/or writing (-s, -ed, -ing, etc.)
- Difficulty remembering spelling words over time and applying spelling rules when writing



GRADES 4 - 8

- Significant difficulty reading and spelling multisyllabic words, often omitting entire syllables as well as making single-sound errors
- Lack of awareness of word structure (prefixes, roots, suffixes)
- Frequent misreading of common sight words (e.g., where, there, what, then, when)
- Difficulty with reading comprehension and learning new information from text because of underlying word recognition difficulties
- Difficulty in comprehension of text because of underlying oral language problems affecting vocabulary and grammar
- Significant difficulty in writing related to problems in spelling and organization



HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE/ADULT

- Continued difficulty with word recognition that significantly affect acquisition of knowledge and ability to analyze written material
- Slow rate of reading
- Continued difficulty with spelling and written composition
- Difficulty taking notes in class
- Trouble learning a foreign language