

Learning Links Fact Sheet

Dyslexia in Children



Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in reading, spelling, and writing. All children will learn these skills at different rates but if a child is having more significant and persistent difficulties compared with others their age, they may be showing signs of Dyslexia.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning disorder (SLD) characterised by persistent difficulties with reading accuracy and reading fluency and can be accompanied by poor spelling. It is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects the phonological component of language. Dyslexia is not a reflection of intelligence and is not linked to vision impairments, so children with Dyslexia may achieve well in other academic areas.

It's estimated that around one in 10 people have Dyslexia. It is a lifelong condition with no cure, but with early diagnosis, intervention and specialised education programs, children with Dyslexia can learn to read alongside their classmates.

Signs of Dyslexia

Signs of Dyslexia can vary widely and can be hard to spot at an early age. Children and young people with Dyslexia can display some of the following characteristics to varying extents:

- Being unable to recognise letters in own name
- Confusing words that sound alike
- Difficulty using 'sounding out' strategies to read simple two and three-letter words like 'at'
- Difficulty seeing or hearing similarities and differences in letters and words.
- Not associating letters with sounds
- Poor reading fluency and spelling
- Avoidance of reading activities such as reading aloud
- Reduced vocabulary in writing

What Causes Dyslexia?

The exact causes of Dyslexia remain unknown; but research suggests it is linked to genetic factors, often running in families. It is a condition present from birth and cannot be “caught” or developed later in life from external factors. Differences in brain anatomy and activity have also been observed in the parts of the brain involved with language processing.

How is Dyslexia Diagnosed?

Early identification and intervention is crucial. Start by reaching out to your child’s teacher to get their opinion. If your child’s reading skills are well below their classmates, or you notice any of the above signs of Dyslexia, then you should consult a GP or paediatrician. A GP or paediatrician can perform ear, eye and medical tests to rule out other possible causes of reading difficulties and refer for a formal assessment by a psychologist. You do not need a referral to book a comprehensive evaluation with a psychologist.

A comprehensive Dyslexia assessment may include:

- Family questionnaires to understand your child’s background and medical history
- Standardised cognitive and academic testing to understand your child’s full range of abilities
- Observations in the home, school or clinic environment to understand your child’s learning abilities in different settings.

Supporting Children With Dyslexia

While there is no cure for Dyslexia, there are many strategies and accommodations that can support children while they develop their reading skills. Some of the most effective ways to support a child with Dyslexia include:

- **Targeted Reading Instruction:** Explicit instruction using a Systematic Synthetic Phonics approach that teaches the link between sounds and letters is proven to be most effective for children with Dyslexia.
- **Assistive Technology:** Using text-to-speech software, audiobooks and scanning pens can help students with Dyslexia to access written information required for learning while still developing their reading, spelling and writing skills.



- **Accommodations:** Special adjustments can be arranged with your child’s school to give them the best opportunity to demonstrate their learning. Some accommodations may include extra time on tests and assignments, taking exams orally instead of through writing and using a computer for writing tasks.

How Learning Links Can Help

Learning Links has more than 50 years of experience supporting children with learning difficulties like Dyslexia. We offer a range of services and resources to support children with reading difficulties.

- **Dyslexia Assessments:** get a comprehensive evaluation with a psychologist to understand the cause of a child’s difficulty with reading.
- **Specialist Dyslexia Tutoring:** get weekly literacy support with a teacher experienced in learning difficulties.
- **Speech Therapy for Literacy:** get weekly therapy sessions to help with language development, speech sound production and phonemic awareness for reading.

Enquire about our services

Call our friendly Intake team on **1300 003 900** or submit an online enquiry.

[www.learninglinks.org.au/
service-enquiry](http://www.learninglinks.org.au/service-enquiry)