

CLUES TO DYSLEXIA

Early Childhood to Adulthood



**EARLY
CHILDHOOD**

**SCHOOL-
AGED
CHILDREN**

**YOUNG
ADULTS -
ADULTS**

SIGNS OF DYSLEXIA

The specific signs of dyslexia, both deficits and strengths, in any one individual will vary according to that age and educational level of that person. **The key is knowing how to recognize them at different periods during development.**





Kindergarten & 1st Grade

- **Failure to understand that words come apart**; for example, that *batboy* can be pulled apart into *bat* and *boy*, and later on, that the word *bat* can be broken down still further and sounded out as: "b" "aaa" "t"
- **Inability to learn to associate letters with sounds**, such as being unable to connect the letter *b* with the "b" sound
- Reading errors that show no connection to the sounds of the letters; for example, the word *big* is read as *goat*
- **The inability to read common one-syllable words or to sound out even the simplest of words**, such as *mat*, *cat*, *hop*, *nap*
- **Complaints about how hard reading is**, or running and hiding when it is time to read
- **A history of reading problems in parents or siblings**

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Naturally, the earliest clues involve mostly spoken language. *The very first clue to dyslexia may be delayed language.* Once your child begins to speak, look for the following problems.

The Preschool Years

- **Trouble learning common nursery rhymes** such as "Jack and Jill" and "Humpty Dumpty"
- A lack of appreciation of rhymes
- **Mispronounced words**; persistent baby talk
- Difficulty in learning (and remembering) names of letters
- Failure to know the letters in his own name

Signs of Strengths

- Curiosity
- A great imagination
- The ability to figure things out
- Eager embrace of new ideas
- Getting the gist of things
- A good understanding of new concepts
- Surprising maturity
- A large vocabulary for age
- Enjoying solving puzzles
- Talent at building models



*Go to next
page for
Problems in
Reading*

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Second Grade On ~ Speaking

- **Mispronunciation of long, unfamiliar, or complicated words; the fracturing of words---**leaving out parts of words or confusing the order of the parts of words; *for example, **aluminum** becomes **amulium***
- **Speech that is not fluent--**pausing or hesitating often when speaking, *lots of um's during speech, no glibness*
- **The use of imprecise language, such as vague references to **stuff** or **things**** *instead of the proper name of an object*
- **Not being able to find the exact word, such as confusing words that sound alike; saying **tornado** instead of **volcano**. Substituting **lotion** for **ocean** or **humanity** of **humidity****
- **The need for time to summon an oral response** or the inability to come up with verbal response quickly when questioned
- **Difficulty in remembering isolated pieces of verbal information--** *trouble remembering dates, names, telephone numbers, random lists; difficulty with rote memory; remembers concepts better than isolated facts*



SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Second Grade On ~ Reading

- **Very slow progress** in acquiring reading skills
- The lack of a strategy to read new words
- **Trouble reading unknown (new, unfamiliar) words** that must be sounded out; *making wild stabs or guesses at reading a word; failure to systematically sound out words*
- The **inability to read small function words** such as *that, an, in*
- Stumbling on reading multisyllabic words, or failing to come close to sounding out the full word
- **Omitting parts of words when reading**; failing to decode parts within a word, *as if someone had chewed a hole in the middle of the word; for example, reading convertible as conible*
- A terrific **fear of reading out loud**; the avoidance of oral reading
- Oral reading full of substitutions, omission, and mispronunciations
- Oral reading that lacks inflection and sounds like the reading of a foreign language
- A **reliance on context** to discern the meaning of what is read
- A better ability to understand words in context than to read isolated single words
- Disproportionately poor performance on multiple-choice tests
- The **inability to finish tests on time**

- The **substitution of words** with the same meaning for words in the text he can't pronounce, *such as car for automobile*
- **Disastrous spelling**, with words not resembling true spelling
- Trouble reading mathematics word problems
- Reading that is very slow and tiring
- **Messy handwriting** despite what may be an excellent facility at word processing-- *nimble fingers*
- Trouble reading anything but memorized words
- A **lack of enjoyment in reading**, the avoidance of reading books or even a sentence
- The **avoidance of reading** for pleasure, which seems too exhausting
- Lowered self esteem
- **A history of reading, spelling, and foreign-language problems in some family members**

Clues in Other Areas

- Difficulty memorizing multiplication facts
- Tendency to solve math problems in head
- Problems with directionality, *getting lost in a building, walking or later driving*
- Difficulty in proofing what was written
- Poor spelling that overshadows great ideas and imagination



SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Signs of Strengths

- **Excellent thinking skills;** conceptualization, reasoning, imagination, abstraction
- Learning accomplished through meaning rather than memorization
- Ability to get the "big picture"
- A high level of understanding of what is read to them
- **The ability to read and to understand high-level, overlearned words in a special area of interest;** *for example, if his hobby is restoring cars, he may be drawn to and able to read auto mechanics magazines.*
- Improvement in an area of interest that is specialized and focused; *a miniature vocabulary that he can decode*
- A surprisingly **sophisticated listening vocabulary**
- Excellence in areas not dependent on reading--math, computers, visual arts
- Often exceptionally empathetic



YOUNG ADULTS & ADULTS

Problems in Speaking

- Persistence of earlier oral language difficulties
- The **mispronunciation of the names of people and places**; *tripping over parts of words*
- **Difficulty remembering names of people and places** and the confusion of names that sound alike
- A struggle to retrieve words; *"It was on the tip of my tongue"*
- Lack of glibness, especially if put on the spot
- Some anxiety when called upon to speak publicly
- Spoken vocabulary that is smaller than listening vocabulary, *hesitation to say aloud words that might be mispronounced*
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Problems in Reading

- A **childhood history of reading and spelling difficulties**
- Word reading becomes more accurate over time but continues to require great effort
- Lack of fluency
- Embarrassment caused by oral reading
- **Trouble reading and pronouncing uncommon, strange, or unique words** such as *people's names, street or location names, food dishes on a menu*
- Persistent reading problems

- Extremum fatigue from reading
- **Slow reading** of most materials
- Penalized by multiple-choice tests, leading to very bad results
- Unusually long hours spent reading school or work related materials
- A preference for books with figures, charts, or graphics
- A preference for books with fewer words per page or with lots of white showing on a page
- Disinclination to read for pleasure
- **Spelling that remains disastrous**
- Particularly poor performance on rote mechanical or clerical tasks that require minimal thinking or reasoning

Signs of Strengths

- A high learning capacity
- **A noticeable excellence when given extra time on multiple-choice tests**
- A noticeable excellence when focused on a highly specialized area *such as medicine, law, public policy, finance, literature, or basic science*
- A noticeable articulateness in the expression of ideas and feelings, *and exceptional empathy and warmth, feeling for others*
- Successes in areas not dependent on rote memory
- A talent for high-level conceptualization and the ability to come up with original insights
- Big-picture thinking
- Thinks outside the box
- Resilience and ability to adapt