

# **Parent Information Handbook**

## **DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS**



**PLANO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## PURPOSE

This handbook was developed by the *Special Academic Advisory Committee for Dyslexia* of the Plano Independent School District. It presents basic information about dyslexia in an easy-to-read, friendly format. It is intended as a support to good, on-going communication between parents and teachers.

## INTRODUCTION

What exactly is dyslexia? What can I expect now that my child has been identified as having dyslexia? Are there things I can do at home that can help my child?

You will find the answers to these questions and more in this handbook. Whether your child is newly identified as having dyslexia or has had interventions in place for some time, the information to follow should be helpful to you as a parent of a child with dyslexia.

## TEXAS LAW CONCERNING DYSLEXIA

- 1985 Legislation was felt necessary for children who experience considerable difficulty in learning to read. Law passed. (T.E.C. 21.924)
- 1986 State Board of Education adopted specific Procedures Concerning Dyslexia.
- 1995 Texas Law was revised, Texas Education Code Section 38.003 Texas Administrative Code Section 74.28
- 1998 State Board of Education "Revised Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders" outlines a process for determining whether students may have reading difficulties. The state law requires program implementation at all grade levels.
- 2001 *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders* was published, containing the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved procedures concerning dyslexia and related disorders. In addition, each education service center has a designated contact person.

Clearly, students who continue to struggle to read despite conventional or intensified instruction are provided organized systems of reading support in the state of Texas.

## **DYSLEXIA DEFINED**

As defined in Texas Education Code § 38.003:

- (1) "*Dyslexia*" means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- (2) "*Related disorders*" includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The definition of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) states:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/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 of Dyslexia, Nov. 12, 2002. This definition is also used by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF 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 phonological awareness processing the sounds of speech, including segmenting or breaking spoken words into individual sounds;
- difficulty 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 with 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.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF DYSLEXIA**

The Plano Independent School District follows the policies and procedures outlined in the Texas Education Code §38.003. Each campus has a teacher trained in dyslexia that conducts screening and assessments.

Identification is determined by the following:

- the student's exhibiting characteristics associated with dyslexia,
- the student's unexpected lack of appropriate academic progress,
- the student's having adequate intelligence, the ability to learn,
- the student's receiving conventional instruction, and
- the student's lack of progress not being due to socio-cultural factors such as language differences, inconsistent attendance, and lack of experiential background.

The decision process established by the district for identification, intervention, and placement concerning dyslexia and other related disorders is in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

The procedures followed as part of this process ensure that parents are kept informed and involved. Parents/guardians are notified of a proposal to assess a student for dyslexia, and are informed of their rights under § 504, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Parent permission must be obtained to assess a student for dyslexia.

Should formal assessment be warranted, areas or domains relating to reading that should be assessed include:

- reading single words in isolation;
- word decoding;
- phonological awareness;
- letter knowledge;
- rapid naming;
- fluency/rate and accuracy;
- reading comprehension; and/or
- spelling

A committee of knowledgeable persons determines whether the student has dyslexia. If the student has dyslexia, the committee also determines whether the student has a disability under the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, § 504. Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support or referral to special education.

# COMPONENTS OF THE DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The instructional program is offered in a small class setting and includes reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods as appropriate.

**Components of instruction**, as appropriate for the reading needs of the student, include:

- Phonemic awareness instruction that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language;
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds and sounds are written with letters in the right order. Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing;
- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language conveys meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context);
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are the carriers of meaning; and
- Process-oriented instruction in the processes or strategies students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers.

**Instructional approaches**, as appropriate to meet the instructional needs of the student, include:

- Explicit, direct instruction that is systematic (structured), sequential, and cumulative. Instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical sequential plan, fits the nature of language (alphabetic principle) with no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge, and maximizes student engagement. This instruction proceeds at a rate commensurate with students' needs, ability levels, and demonstration of progress;
- Individualized instruction that meets the specific learning needs of each individual student in a small group setting; a reading curriculum that matches each student's individual ability level and contains all of the *Components of Instruction* mandated in 19 TAC §74.28;
- Intensive, highly concentrated instruction that maximizes student engagement, uses specialized methods and materials, produces results, and contains all the *Components of Instruction* mandated in 19 TAC §74.28;
- Meaning-based instruction that is directed toward purposeful reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and composition; and
- Multisensory instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) during teacher presentations and student practice.

# PARENT TIPS AND RESOURCES

You may find the following suggestions, tips, and resources to be helpful in working with your child.

## READING ALOUD

Struggling readers need daily practice in reading aloud. Use the strategies below to guide your child's reading.

### Problem Solving Strategies for Parents

A good reader is one who can figure out (problem-solve) words he doesn't know. A good reader has a repertoire of strategies to draw from, and can flexibly make use of these as needed. You can help by being aware of what some of these strategies are, and prompting your child to make use of the strategies he knows rather than problem-solving for him.

**1. Your child should monitor his reading.** He will try to make words and picture agree or match. Looking puzzled, stopping, trying it again by starting over, are all signals that let you know that he is aware that something isn't quite right.

PARENTS: It is important that the child do the monitoring. Do not "help" too quickly. Give your child thinking time. If your child really is stuck, after allowing time, you can ask: "Was that okay?" "Why did you stop?" "What did you notice?" "Was there something tricky in that sentence? Show me."

**2. Your child should self-correct his errors.**

PARENTS: Allow time for him to fix his errors. The child must take the first step. The child may reread the sentence to support his attempts to figure out a hard word.

**3. Your child should cross-check his strategy use.** He should be checking to see if his attempt makes sense. Does it then also look right? Does the word match the beginning letter sound?

PARENTS: If your child becomes frustrated and doesn't know what to do you may want to use one of the following prompts to help him on his way:

"What could you try?"

"Do you know another word that starts like that?"

"Do you know a word that looks like this word?"

"What do you think it could be?"

"Run your finger under the tricky word."

"Do the letters give you any clues?"

"Get your mouth ready to say that first sound."

Remember, it is very important that your child do the reading work, not you! Give sufficient time for your child to try and try again.

# TIPS TO ENCOURAGE READING AND WRITING

1. Keep books and magazines in your child's room. They will choose reading more often if books and magazines are there.
2. Carry books along when you go to the dentist, doctor, or places you may have to wait.
3. Reading a story or poem is a magical way to soothe a fretful child or relieve teen boredom.
4. Have your child help with a family message center. Children love the sense of accomplishment – and helping! – when they seek out items from the shopping list. At the same time you are getting your child to read – while seemingly doing something else. Keep grocery lists, chore lists, messages, shopping lists, "love notes," etc.
5. Read recipes. All reading doesn't happen in books. When you are cooking, ask your child to read the ingredients to you.
6. Read road signs. While you are driving, ask your child to read the road signs: Stop, Yield, One Way, street signs, or maps.
7. Get taped recordings of books. You may lack time to read to your child as much as you would like, but that is no reason your child should be denied this pleasure.
8. Encourage your child to keep a daily journal.
9. Vary the writing your children do at home for different audiences and for different purposes.
10. Encourage creativity and the enjoyment of writing.
11. Model reading and writing for your children.

## SELECTING BOOKS FOR YOUR CHILD

Use the steps below to help in selecting books from the library or bookstore that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for your child.

1. Choose a random page from the middle of the book and ask your child to read it aloud.
2. Keep an unseen count for every time he makes an error.
3. If he makes 5 or more errors on the page, the book is likely too difficult.

If your child shows interest in the book, a suggestion would be to use it as one for you to read aloud to your child. Modeling fluent reading provides a wonderful opportunity to share good literature with your child. Listening to an adult read fluently permits the child to hear the flow and pace of language as the writer intended.

# **HOMEWORK HELP**

There are many things parents can do to help when it comes to homework:

- Set a regular time for doing homework. Take into account the need for having a break from schoolwork and the importance of getting work done early in the evening. For many families, right after dinner is a good time.
- Designate a regular place for doing homework that takes into account your child's learning preferences. Have needed supplies on hand.
- Model good work habits yourself. Be nearby, doing your own "homework" such as paying bills, sorting mail, etc.
- Coach your child at the beginning and end of an assignment, and at checkpoints along the way if he has difficulty with lengthier assignments.
- If your child has difficulty working independently on assignments he has the skills to complete, establish a schedule that includes time he is expected to work alone before asking for help. Discuss the kinds of help you will give him and the things you expect him to do alone.
- Schedule breaks and limit the number of spontaneous interruptions.
- Break a long assignment into smaller, more manageable tasks. Coach him so that he can learn to do this for himself.
- Be available to spell words if this interferes with his flow of thought while writing, or to serve as his scribe on lengthier assignments if handwriting is a hindrance.
- Make sure you and your child understand the expectations for homework. It may be helpful to review the directions and estimate the amount of time it will take.
- Establish the habit of using a planner to record assignments, directions, and due dates. Coach your child to seek clarification from the teacher if an assignment seems unclear.

Coach your child by asking questions or reinforcing what's been done. Help your child see how a particular assignment or skill fits into the curriculum. Make suggestions, but avoid doing the work for your child. Work together in a way that keeps the child responsible.

# **SELF-ESTEEM**

Students with dyslexia may face challenges emotionally as well as academically. Unwavering support and acceptance from a parent is critical. Encouragement and support in developing special talents not related to reading can help build confidence and self-image, which often carries over into overall performance. Be specific in setting realistic goals and confront problems honestly. Confidence and self-esteem develop from real, tangible successes. Honest praise for hard work, persistence, willingness to ask for help, and accepting and learning from mistakes will emphasize the importance of traits and attitudes that can lead to long-term success.



## TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT DYSLEXIA

Your child may have questions about dyslexia. He needs knowledge, reassurance, and support from you. Listed below are some questions your child might ask, along with some simple, straightforward answers.

*What is dyslexia?*

Dyslexia means having a hard time learning to read.

*How did I get dyslexia?*

You were born with it, just like you were born with (...freckles, green eyes, etc.)

*Is there something wrong with my brain?*

No, your brain is normal. The road your brain takes to reading is different. It may be harder, and it may take longer, but you will be able to learn to read.

*Can anyone catch it?*

No, dyslexia is not contagious, like a virus or cold.

*Why does it have such a weird name?*

The word "dyslexia" comes from the Latin word "dys" which means difficult, and the Greek word "lexia" which means words.

*Does it mean I am dumb?*

No, dyslexia is a problem that intelligent people have with reading. It has nothing to do with how smart you are.

*Will my dyslexia ever go away?*

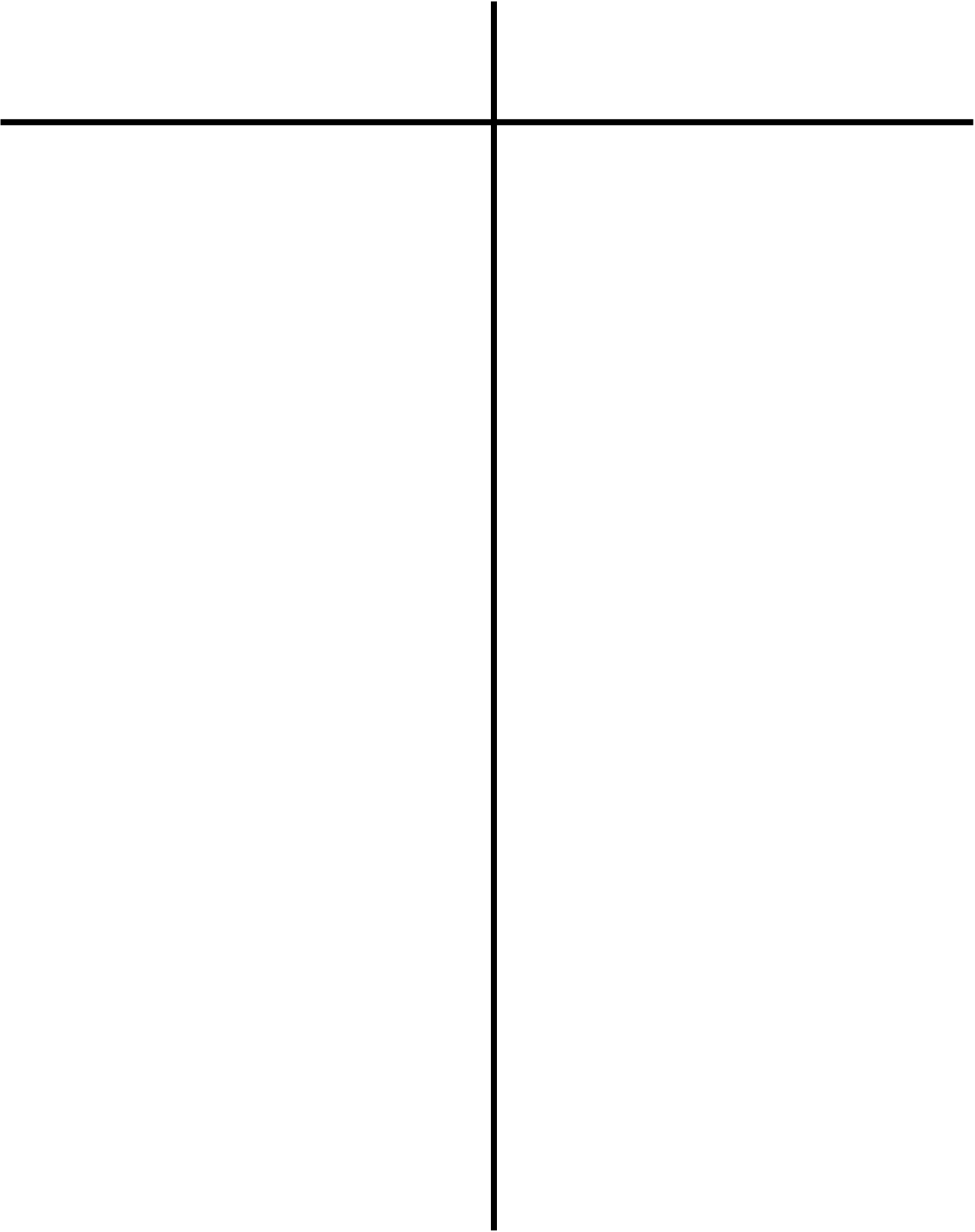
No, but children who have dyslexia can learn to read. You are not the problem; you have a problem with learning to read. You will learn how to handle your dyslexia.

# STUDY SKILLS

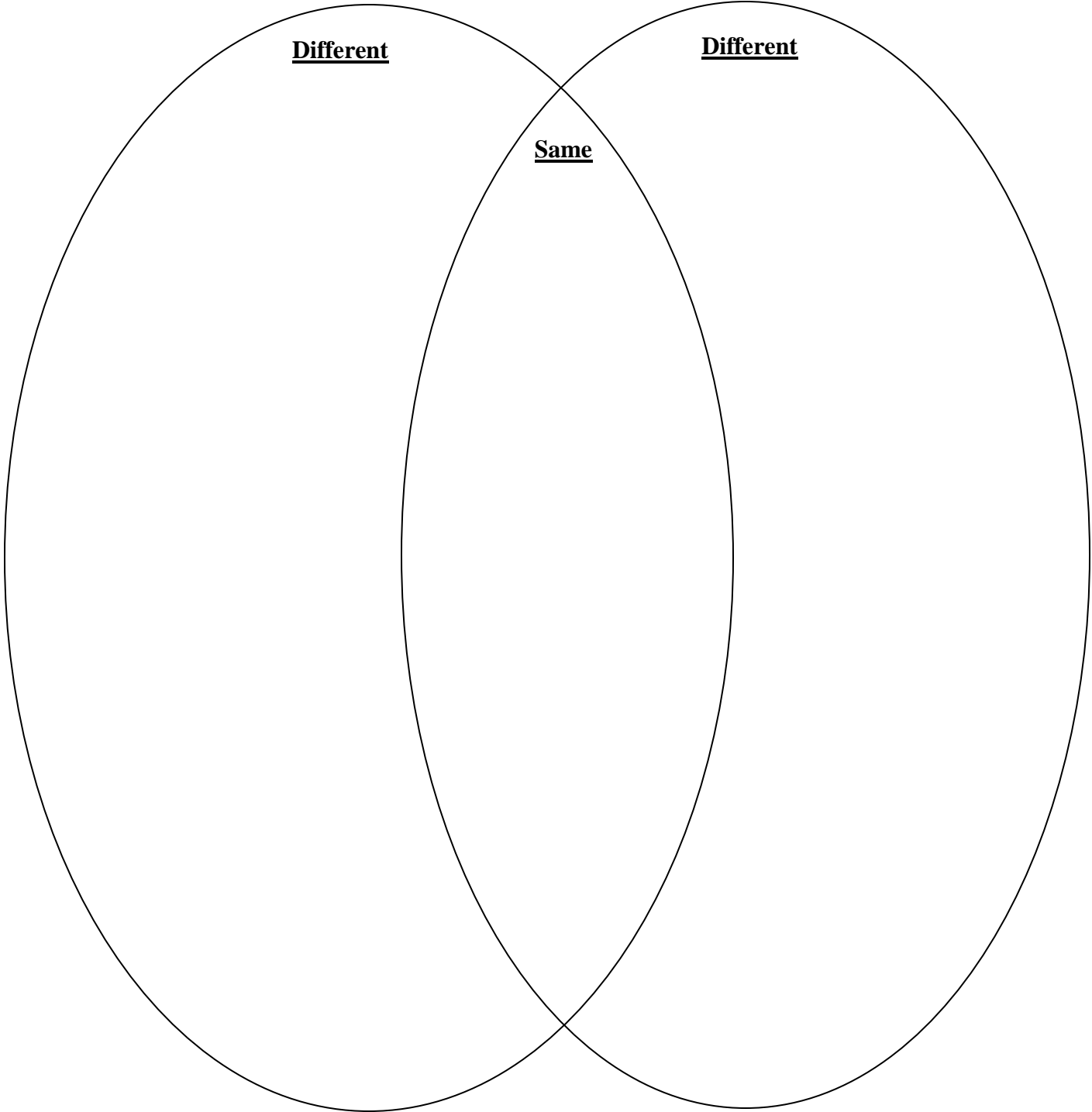
**Graphic organizer for comparing two books:**

<b>How they are the same</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li></ol>	
<b>Title:</b>  <b>Description:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li></ol>	<b>Title:</b>  <b>Description:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li></ol>
<b>How they are different</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li></ol>	

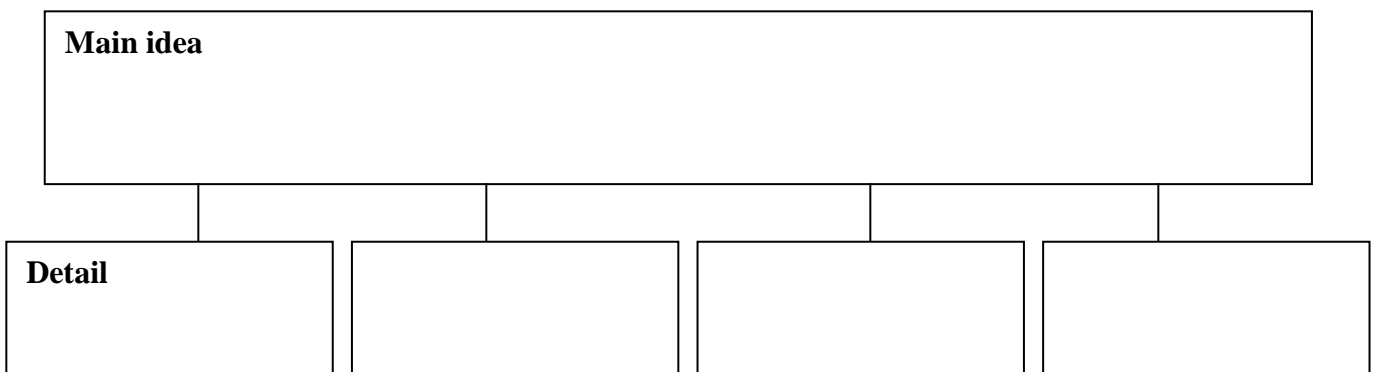
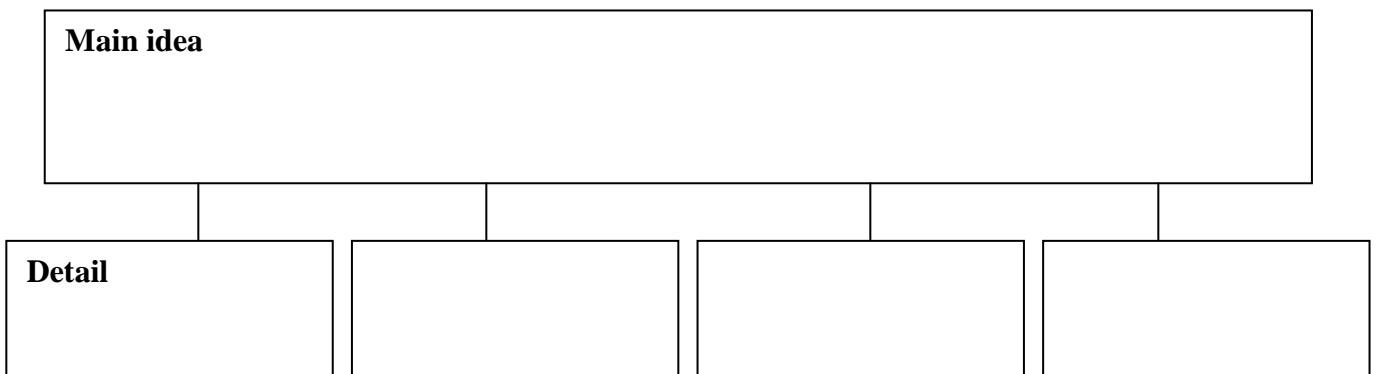
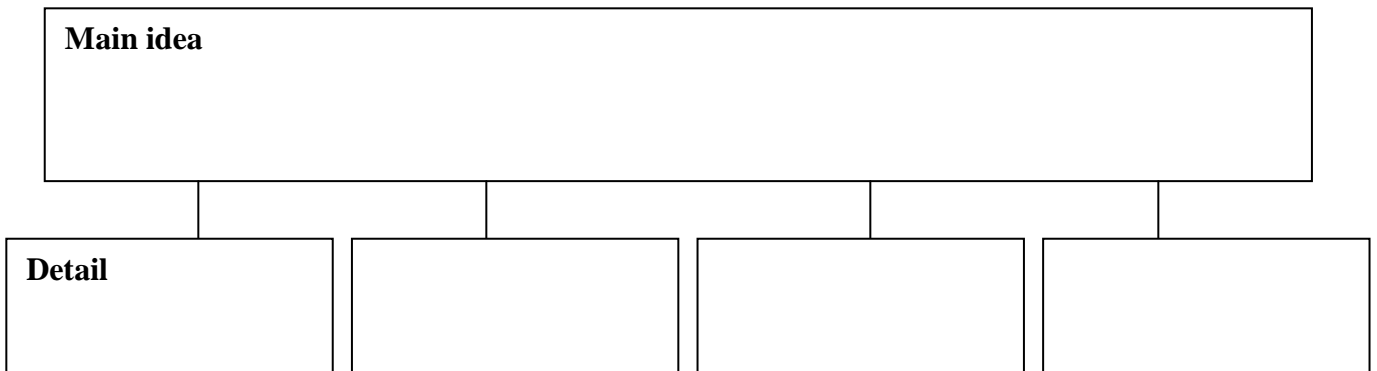
**Graphic organizer for comparing:**



**Graphic organizer for comparing:**



**Graphic organizer for main idea:**



**Graphic organizer for sequencing:**



## Graphic organizer for persuasive writing:

**Opinion:**

**Advantages:**

1.

2.

3.

**Disadvantages:**

1.

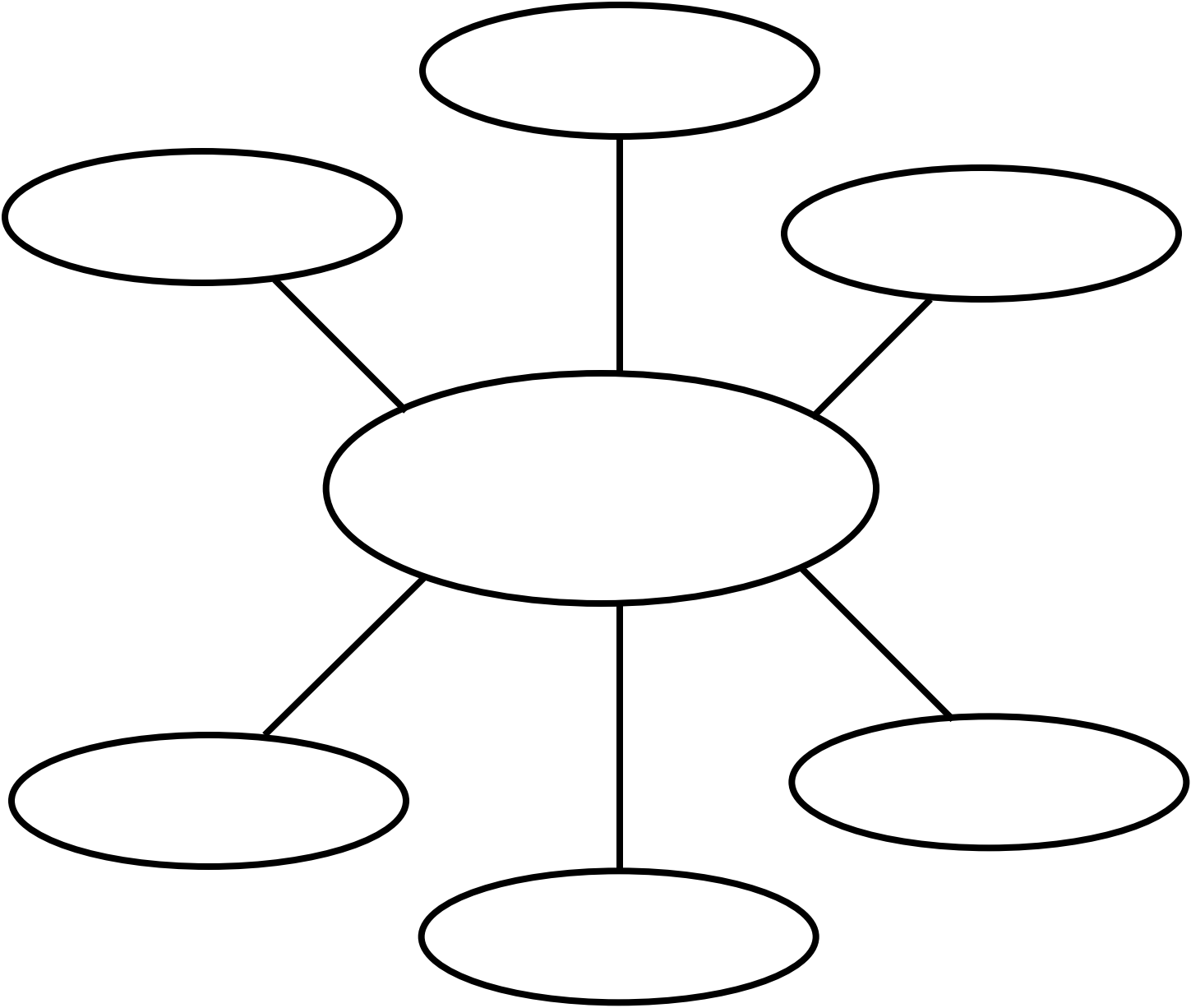
2.

3.

**Conclusion:**

**Graphic organizer for content:**

**Concept Map**





# SUCCESS STORIES

Many people who have struggled with dyslexia or other related learning disorders in an academic environment have become true success stories as adults. You may find it helpful to share some of these names with your child, with the message that having dyslexia and achieving success can go hand-in-hand.

Hans Christian Andersen	Author of children's fairy tales
Harry Anderson	Actor, magician, comedian
Stephen Bacque	Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998
Ann Bancroft	Explorer, lecturer, educator, first woman to travel across the ice to the North and South Poles
Harry Belafonte	Singer, actor, entertainer
Alexander Graham Bell	Inventor
Dale S. Brown	Author, disability advocate
George Burns	Actor, comedian
Stephen J. Cannell	Screenwriter, producer, director
Gaston Caperton	Former governor of West Virginia
John T. Chamber	CEO of Cisco Systems
Nola D. Chee	Award-winning poet and author
Cher	Entertainer, actress
Agatha Christie	English mystery writer
Winston Churchill	Former Prime Minister of Britain
John Corcoran	Real estate millionaire
Tom Cruise	Actor
Fred Curry	Navy pilot, CEO of Greyhound Lines
Leonardo Da Vinci	Renaissance artist, sculptor, painter
Walt Disney	Cartoonist, visionary founder of Disneyland/Disneyworld
Dr. Red Duke	Physician, television commentator
Frank Dunkle	Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Thomas Edison	Inventor, scientist
Tomima Edmark	Author, entrepreneur
Albert Einstein	Scientist, philosopher
Gustave Flaubert	Writer
Danny Glover	Actor
John Grisham	Author
Whoopi Goldberg	Actress
Edward Hallowell, MD	Author, psychiatrist, ADD specialist
Ellie Hawkins	Record-breaking rock climber
William Hewlett	co-founder of Hewlett-Packard
John Horner	Curator of paleontology, technical advisor to Steven Spielberg for <b>Jurassic Park</b> and <b>The Lost World</b>
John Irving	Author and screenwriter
William James	Psychologist, philosopher
Bruce Jenner	U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist

Bob Jimenez	TV anchorman
Magic Johnson	Professional athlete
David Jones	Stunt man, pioneer in helicopter aerial photography
Thomas H. Kean	President of Drew University, former governor of New Jersey
Sylvia Law	Professor of law and medicine, author
Jay Leno	Comedian and TV show host
Craig McCaw	Pioneer of cellular industry
Edward James Olmos	Actor, community activist
Paul J. Orfalea	Entrepreneur, founder of Kinkos
George Patton	Military General
Patricia Polacco	Author, illustrator of children's books
Robert Rauschenberg	Artist
Nelson Rockefeller	Former governor of New York, former vice president of the United States
Nolan Ryan	Professional athlete
Charles Schwab	Founder of investment brokerage
William Simmons, MD	Professor of anesthesiology
Tom Smothers	Comedian
Nancy L. Sonnabend	Researcher, inventor, author
Jackie Stewart	Race car driver
Richard Strauss	Real estate developer, banker
Victor Villasenor	Award-winning author
Lindsay Wagner	Actress, author, "The Bionic Woman"
Russell White	Professional athlete
Roger W. Wilkins	Head of the Pulitzer Prize Board
Woodrow Wilson	Former president of the United States
Henry Winkler	Actor, director, humanitarian, "The Fonz"
Eric Wynalda	Professional athlete
William B. Yeats	Poet, dramatist, Nobel prize winner

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. **Graphonemic knowledge:** Students learn blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing.
2. **Individualized instruction:** A reading program in which both materials and methods are matched to each student's individual ability level.
3. **Linguistic instruction:** Students learn proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language.
4. **Meaning based:** emphasis on comprehension and composition through purposeful reading and writing.
5. **Multisensory instruction:** incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile).
6. **Phonemic awareness:** Students learn to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language.
7. **Process oriented:** emphasis on strategies students use for decoding and encoding, leading to word recognition, fluency, and comprehension become independent readers.
8. **Explicit direct instruction:** A structured plan that is presented in a cumulative sequence.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children

[www.SchwabLearning.org](http://www.SchwabLearning.org)

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International Dyslexia Association  
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