



THE  
**HOUSSON CENTER**  
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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## Dyslexia

**Dyslexia** is most commonly associated with difficulty in learning to read. It affects a child's ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds in language. Kids with dyslexia have a hard time decoding new words, or breaking them down into manageable chunks they can then sound out. This can cause difficulty with reading, writing and spelling. They may compensate by memorizing words, but they'll have trouble recognizing new words and may be slow in retrieving even familiar ones.

## Statistics

- Dyslexia is the most common learning disability
- About 1 in 5 kids are dyslexic
- 80-90% of kids with a learning disorder(s) have dyslexia
- Equally effects boys and girls

## Symptoms

- Struggles with learning even simple rhymes
- Has a speech delay
- Has trouble following directions
- Repeats or omits short words (such as: and, the, but)
- Finds it difficult to tell left from right
- Has difficulty sounding out new words
- Lacks fluency compared to other children their age
- Reverses letters and numbers when reading (ex: reads "saw" as "was")
- Finds it difficult to take notes and copy down words from the board
- Struggles with rhyming, associating sounds with letters, and sequencing and ordering sounds

- Stumbles and has difficulty spelling even common words; frequently they will spell them phonetically (ex: “hrbr” instead of harbor)
- Avoids being called on to read out loud in front of classmates
- Becomes tired or frustrated from reading
- Finds it difficult to decode logos and signs
- Struggles when trying to learn the rules to games
- Has difficulty keeping track of multi-step directions
- Struggles with getting the hang of telling time
- Finds it especially challenging to learn another language
- Becomes incredibly frustrated, which can affect their mood and emotional stability

## Diagnosis:

(should wait until around age 6)

School district evaluations
Private evaluations by a psychologist, reading specialist, speech language therapist, or school psychologist

## Risk Factors for Children

- Premature birth
- Low birth weight

## Treatment

- Multi-sensory instruction in decoding skills
- Repetition and review of skills
- Intensity of intervention — that is, more than being pulled out of class once a week for extra help
- Small group or individual instruction
- Teaching decoding skills
- Drilling sight words
- Teaching comprehension strategies to help kids derive meaning from what they’re reading
- Accommodations:
  - Extra time on tests
  - A quiet space to work
  - The option to record lectures

- The option to give verbal, rather than written, answers (when appropriate)
- Elimination of oral reading in class
- Exemption from foreign language learning

## How Can I Help My Child?

- Listen to teachers' recommendations, and should it be warranted, see a licensed psychologist or school district evaluator for an evaluation. Children should not be tested before age 6, since their brains need to develop to the point that a distinct difference can be seen.
- Parents should also be patient with their children's reading and language capabilities and understand that dyslexia is very common!

## Resources:

- [Understanding Dyslexia and How to Help Kids Who Have It \(childmind.org\)](http://childmind.org)
- [Dyslexia - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org)
- [Dyslexia: What It Is, Causes, Symptoms, Treatment & Types \(clevelandclinic.org\)](http://clevelandclinic.org)
- [Signs of Dyslexia - Yale Dyslexia](http://yale.edu)
- [Dyslexia - Symptoms - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- [Dyslexia: Common Signs and Symptoms | Psych Central](http://psychcentral.com)

## Extra Helpful Resources (Books)

- *The Whole Brain Child* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *How to Talk so Little Kids Will Listen* by Joanna Faber and Julie King
- *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
- *No-Drama Discipline; the Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture your Child's Developing Mind* by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
- *Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD* by Eli R. Lebowitz, Ph.D.
- *Freeing your Child from Anxiety* by Tamar E. Chansky, Ph.D.