

### Checklist of Dyslexic Characteristics\*

| Visual Dyslexia  | Auditory Dyslexia   | Dysgraphia  |
|--|---|---|
| Perceives symbols backwards, upside down   | Doesn't hear phonic elements<br><br>can't distinguish short vowels<br>can't distinguish long vowels<br>can't tell what letters make up consonant clusters ( <u>br</u> , <u>str</u> , <u>ph</u> , <u>sm</u> , etc.)<br><br>Can't tell when words sound same or different<br><br>Can't give rhyming words     | Writes backwards (mirror writing)<br><br>Has difficulty making letters, numerals, words<br><br>Can't remember how to make certain letters<br><br>Makes letters backwards, upside down |
| Reverses words while reading, writing<br><br>on-no<br>saw-was<br>of-for<br>but-tub   | Can't apply simple phonic generalizations while reading<br><br>Can't hear syllables in words<br><br>Can't hear accented syllables<br><br>Can't blend parts of words into whole words<br><br>Can't learn to interpret diacritical markings in dictionary<br><br>Gives garbled pronunciation (emany, vigenar) | Distorts letters or numerals while writing<br><br>Can't copy simple shapes without distortions (circle, square, triangle)   |
| Fails to perceive minimal cues<br><br>omits parts of words<br>leaves off endings<br>misreads similar letters, words  | Can't apply phonetic rules to spelling<br><br>Writes words phonetically ( <u>kat</u> , <u>reefews</u> , etc.)<br><br>Asks speaker to repeat (major habit)<br><br>Must vocalize (mutter) while reading alone   |   |
| Telescopes words<br><br>Perseverates (adds letters, syllables)<br><br>Can't recall correct order of letters in words<br><br>Has difficulty repeating months, days of week, items in sequence |   | *Dale R. Jordan, Ph.D<br>Jordan Diagnostic<br>Oklahoma City, OK   |

### 13 Good Teaching Suggestions For Children With Learning Disabilities

1. It is important that parents understand the child's problem as early as possible. Strengths should be pointed out as well as weaknesses. Arrangements may need to be made for one-to-one help. If the parents cannot help perhaps peer tutors, college student aides or parent volunteers can be utilized.
2. Some students require more careful and detailed instructions if they are to understand an assignment. Don't assume that they are "not paying attention" or are "day-dreaming." They may be embarrassed to tell you they do not understand. Get eye contact and teach the child to watch the face of the person speaking. Show instead of tell. Too much talking confuses some children. Use visual and an auditory stimuli in conjunction as much as possible.
3. Teach new concepts as concretely as possible. The task should be analyzed so steps are small and carefully sequenced. Learning requiring concentrated attention should be presented during very short time intervals. Have the child repeat as much of the verbal instruction as possible.
4. Copying from the board should not be required of the child who after observation cannot do this task. Place the assignment on a sheet of paper for that child. When asking a child to copy from a given piece of paper, place the paper directly above his copying paper so that he does not have to move the eye from side to side which causes reversals.
5. Use the tape recorder as a teaching tool:
  - a. Tape record the directions for assignments or any written material, if the student is unable to read well.
  - b. Allow the student to tape record his answers to tests or assignments if spelling or written expression is a problem.
  - c. Allow a student with written expression problems to compose his story or report on the tape recorder and then write it by replaying it in short snatches.
  - d. Children who have trouble with written expression should be allowed to give oral reports as much as possible.
6. Keep homework at a minimum because it usually takes an LD child longer to do written work. Send home only review or practice work you know the child understands, not something you have not yet been able to teach him.
7. When independent work is required, be sure the LD child is given tasks he can complete with a chance of being successful at least 75% of the time. Sometimes a ten minute work page should be subdivided into ten one minute segments. This can easily be done by folding the assignment sheet in thirds and have the child complete one-third of the task before unfolding it and going on to the second part.

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8. Spend a little time watching how a child goes about doing a task.
9. Suggestions for correcting papers:
  - a. Whenever possible, check assignments immediately with the student.
  - b. Use a pencil other than red.....it has bad connotations!
  - c. Mark the correct answers instead of the incorrect answers.
  - d. Materials can be made self-correcting to provide immediate feedback.  
Provide a key.
10. If at all possible, vary the overall rhythm of activities so the student has written work along with manipulative tasks, work at the board and perhaps some "housekeeping" tasks.
11. Children with visual perceptual problems find that purple dittoed material is very difficult to read. When making material for your class, use a black ditto or a stencil. Be careful in spacing the questions and other material on the paper. Leave plenty of space between individual teaching items on a paper. Make sure that the paper given these children is legible. Handwritten dittoes are impossible for these children to comprehend.
12. Math problems should be carefully spaced on the paper and enough space allowed for the complete answer.
13. When creating tests, short answers are more successful. Matching questions are the easiest for the LD child to adjust to. The answer is there for him to copy in another position on the test. Remember that tests can be given in a buddy system where the test is read to a child and his "buddy" records the answers.

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Suggestions for Teachers in Helping Children with Learning Difficulties

- Give a child a small amount to do at one time.
- Use concrete objects and simplify everything as much as possible. Give him material he can do and avoid use of abstracts.
- Allow him to work slowly. If he can't copy from the board, give him the master copy you used when you put the work on the board.
- Have the child work at a "clean desk" or table and facing a relatively bare wall or area. Clutter confuses or distracts this type of child. What to some children would be an interesting and stimulating bulletin board would be a confusing distraction to this child.
- Keep your voice at a moderate and even level. The child with an auditory problem has just as much difficulty understanding shouted words as he does mumbled ones.
- Try not to single out or focus attention on this child in front of his peers. A careless statement such as "I'll help you get started on your test later since I know you can't read the questions" can belittle this child and destroy his self-image and completely turn him off.
- Plan ahead for the child who can't read, so he can perform the same as other children. When the content is the important thing rather than reading practice (such as in a class of social studies), let him have the material read to him by a parent, older sibling, or school volunteer. Likewise, in instances where the content is the issue rather than the spelling or handwriting, let him dictate his own ideas to someone else to write down. The "someone else" should be instructed not to make corrections or changes. In correcting a paper, mark only for the important phase and do not take points off for errors that this particular assignment is not specifically involved with.
- Structure the page for him. Give him a visual model he can follow using numbered boxes, columns, etc.
- Give him credit for what he has done right instead of concentrating on what is wrong. He needs a great deal of encouragement, and praise should be given when and wherever it is earned. Do not put marks of a demoralizing nature on his paper.
- Allow this child to take tests orally and have a longer time allotment. Avoid surprise quizzes or timed assignments.
- Have him use a bookmark to block out all but one line to reduce distractability.
- Have him use a marker to block out all but one math problem.

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- Present material orally and permit oral answers
- When he is given an assignment, show him how to arrange his paper in columns, rows, etc.
- Ask short questions.
- For the child with an auditory discrimination problem, seat him near the front at a point at which you can face him most of the time while you are speaking. Speak clearly and "mouth" your words. He can read your lips to help him distinguish between similar sounds, i.e. bed from beg, cope from coke, pet from pat, etc.
- For the child with an auditory memory problem, give directions in small single units. Instead of saying "take out your spelling book, turn to page 45, and using ink and white paper, copy the words in column one," say "Take out your spelling book....now turn to page 45....now take a sheet of white paper and your pen....find column one (demonstrate)....now copy the words in this column." This rule applies to older perceptually involved students as well as younger ones.

More Hints for Teachers

This child often:

- needs brief and specific directions with short term, easily attained goals.
- cannot make choices easily....should be directed often.
- finds it difficult to work with other children. He may want to participate but gets into difficulty easily. If he is joining a group, give him specific directions beforehand.
- is usually bright, may understand but not respond reasonable well, so let him sit with reading groups and follow along by listening. Give answers orally.
- is confused with too many symbols....suggest simplified work sheets, particularly in math.
- has difficulty shutting out noise and movement. Find him a quiet corner to work in for some periods of the day.
- is interested and willing to work with a tape recorder and head sets if the tape is clear in its directions and work.
- is physically immature in hand, eye, and body coordination. Emphasis on games and activities leading to better coordination should be encouraged.

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- is subtly rejected by his peers. Make an effort for him to belong.
- prefers to work at some tasks alone. This should not be ignored but encouraged where he finds it difficult to work with others.
- has a very short attention span. Needs to be checked on constantly
- needs directions repeated quietly to him again after they have been given to the class. Have him repeat and explain directions to you.
- gets very upset. When this occurs it takes him a long time to "get in the groove." Give him freedom to move before he explodes.
- cannot read test questions or write the answers. Make arrangements to give him crucial tests orally. Does much better on multiple choice questions.
- cannot work under time pressure. Allow him time to work at his own pace. He will fall apart under pressure.

by Libby Cohen, Ed.D  
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