



Dear ECFE Parent Educators,

Greetings! We are Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota (DDMN), a local non-profit. Our mission is three-fold; to **educate** our community about dyslexia; to **advocate** for learning environments in which every child has access to the tools they need to succeed in reading at grade level; and to **empower** families and educators with information and resources to support and meet the needs of children with dyslexia and literacy struggles.

To that end, we are excited to provide you with a free parent educator lesson addressing Early Literacy and Dyslexia for use with the parents/caregivers you serve. Did you know, up to 20% of our population has dyslexia?

This one-time lesson will build awareness of dyslexia, dispel myths, and provide actionable steps for building early literacy skills at home, while also providing signs/symptoms that may indicate a child could struggle to learn to read. As you may know, early identification of dyslexia is key to successful remediation.

Materials included in this lesson:

#### **For Parent Educators**

- Lesson Plan
- A pre-recorded video presentation
- A fully-scripted lesson
- Group discussion questions

#### **For Parents/Caregivers**

- Guided Notes
- Three double-sided handouts
  1. Decoding Dyslexia MN flyer
  2. Dyslexia Resources
  3. Early Literacy Resources

We know most teacher-prep programs do not provide detailed information about dyslexia and you may not be well-versed on this subject. That's okay! Should you have any questions before or after using this lesson, please don't hesitate to reach out to DDMN via email at [info@decodingdyslexiamn.org](mailto:info@decodingdyslexiamn.org). We are always here as a resource to you and the families you serve.

Parent education is an invaluable resource to Minnesota families. We believe planting a seed about literacy struggles and dyslexia now, will result in more families being aware of signs/symptoms and being prepared to advocate for their child, should the need arise.

Thank you for all you do for families and caregivers! We hope you'll choose to use this lesson in your classroom. And again, please reach out to DDMN if you have any questions.

Best,

M.J. Bauer  
Executive Director  
Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota



# EARLY LITERACY and DYSLEXIA Lesson Plan

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

[What Dyslexia Is](#) | [Myths](#) | [Signs of Dyslexia](#) | [Early Literacy](#)

You can't address a problem of which you aren't aware. Help caregivers understand how to support early literacy and recognize signs of dyslexia. This lesson will help them be proactive in advocating for their child, if necessary. The sooner a child with dyslexia receives appropriate instruction or intervention, the better the outcome. Knowledge is power!

## DISCUSSION

We have provided [discussion questions](#) you can use in your classroom. Please reach out if you have additional questions or need more information on any topic.

## FAMILY HANDOUTS

[DDMN Flyer](#) | [Dyslexia Resources](#) | [Early Literacy Resources](#)

Please print each of these pages for caregivers to take home (they are all double sided). There are discussion questions that reference with these handouts.

Make sure caregivers have a writing utensil for note taking.

## PARENT PERSPECTIVE

*"I soaked in everything ECFE had to offer. When I found out my child had dyslexia, I wondered why I didn't learn about this in my ECFE classes. I could have taken action sooner."*  
- Minnesota Parent

## VIDEO

Scan me to get started!



**"Without intervention, children who are poor readers at the end of first grade almost never acquire average-level reading skills by the end of elementary school."**

- Gaab Lab, Harvard  
Graduate School of Education

**Website:** <https://www.decodingdyslexiamn.org>

**Facebook page (public):** Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota

**Facebook group for parents (private):** Dyslexia in MN – Family Support

**Email:** [info@decodingdyslexiamn.org](mailto:info@decodingdyslexiamn.org)

**Instagram & X:** @dyslexiamn





## **Parent Educator Script and Discussion Questions**

**INTRODUCTION:** Today we are discussing dyslexia and early literacy skills. Dyslexia is an unexpected difficulty when learning to read. Signs of dyslexia can be seen as early as preschool. Knowing early literacy milestones and understanding dyslexia now, can prepare us for ensuring your kids are on track for learning to read. If they struggle now or in the future, you'll know what to look for and where to turn.

We'll start with a video from a local, non-profit organization called Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota (DDMN). One of their goals is to help parents understand what dyslexia really is. While many of us have heard the term, we might not fully know what it means. Dyslexia affects far more of our population than we know, because many people go through life undiagnosed.

If reading struggles are a concern, the earlier children are tested and diagnosed with dyslexia, the better the outcome.

Here is a quote from the Gaab Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education:

*"Without intervention, children who are poor readers at the end of first grade almost never acquire average-level reading skills by the end of elementary school. (Francis et al., 1996; Juel, 1988; Shaywitz et al., 1999; Torgesen and Burgess, 1998)*

Alright, time to jump into our video. As you watch, think to yourself...is there anyone in your family who struggled to read or someone who hated school growing up? What about your extended family? Were they diagnosed with a learning disability, or could they be undiagnosed? What was your experience in school?

***Pass out Guided Notes to each caregiver.***

Use these guided notes to fill in key pieces of information from this video and add your own notes. You will be filling in the blanks around these topics: definition of dyslexia, myths around dyslexia, signs of dyslexia, and early literacy skills to practice at home.

***Start the video.***

Opportunity to briefly pause the video at 02:24 for caregivers to fill-in notes.

Opportunity to briefly pause the video at 13:38 for caregivers to fill-in notes AND

***pass out DDMN flyer/Signs of Dyslexia Handout.***

Opportunity to briefly pause the video at 17:53 for caregivers to fill-in notes.

***After the video, pass out Caregiver Handouts:***

- Dyslexia Resources
- Early Literacy Resources & Reading Skills at Different Ages

**DISCUSSION AFTER VIDEO:**

Let's start by acknowledging that some people can feel anxious about a diagnosis, fearing stigma or shame. However, there is no shame in a dyslexia diagnosis. As mentioned in the video, dyslexia is not linked to intelligence; it's a neurological difference in how the brain processes language. A diagnosis explains why a child may struggle with reading, writing, or spelling, providing relief and understanding. Many kids feel "dumb" when they struggle, but knowing the cause (their brain processes language differently) gives them clarity and a clear path forward. Nearly all children with dyslexia can learn to read with the right instruction. Please note, in medical and educational paperwork dyslexia is referred to as a Specific Learning Disability in Reading or SLD in Reading.

As we learned from the video, dyslexia is hereditary. Let's think about that as we start our discussion.



## **Early Literacy and Dyslexia Discussion Questions**

- 1. While watching this video, did anything resonate with you? Did anything give you pause as you think back on your own school experience growing up? The experience of your spouse or your extended family...parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt/uncle? Is it possible, even if undiagnosed, that dyslexia may run in your family?**

Optional reply: If they say yes, your response would be, you may want to pay closer attention to how your child/children experience the process of learning to read.

- 2. What were your experiences like in grades K-2? Did reading come easily to you? Did you love reading or did you find it difficult and exasperating?**

**Even if you loved reading, were there other skills that were slow to develop or areas where you struggled that could be symptoms of dyslexia...things like putting your ideas on paper, writing a term paper, poor spelling, etc.?**

Optional reply: If yes, your response would be, you may want to consider taking the Parental Screening Tool that was mentioned in the video. There is a QR code for this screening tool in your handouts. This screener can be found on the International Dyslexia Association website.

- 3. What did you think dyslexia was before you saw this presentation? What do you understand it to be now?**

Optional reply: The definition of dyslexia is on the front page of the flyer from Decoding Dyslexia MN.

- 4. What surprised you about what you learned about dyslexia and early literacy?**

Optional reply: If they want to learn more, there is a handout in your packet called "*Dyslexia Resources*." There you will find QR codes for several very informative podcasts from educational journalist Emily Hanford. There are also QR codes for the websites of Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota, the International Dyslexia Association, and the Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity.

- 5. Let's take a look at the back page of the flyer from Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota titled "Signs of Dyslexia." Do you see any signs of dyslexia in your children, yourself, or a family member?**

Optional reply: As you'll note, there are signs listed by ages and stages, as well as more general signs you may notice around reading, spelling, or writing. The prevailing guidance states, if you notice three or more of these signs, it is worth learning more about dyslexia or consulting with an expert. Families can reach out to Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota for guidance on next steps. They can also seek educational testing from a neuropsychologist.

It is worth noting, through no fault of their own, not all teachers are well-trained on dyslexia. It is not usually part of their teacher prep program at their college or university. So, the advice of DDMN is to follow your gut and consult an expert.

- 6. Please grab your "Early Literacy Resources" handout. What early literacy practices might you add at home? Are there any "Reading Skills at Different Ages" that have you wondering?**

Optional reply: You can and should continue to read out loud to your children. You can also work on the new alphabet song, proper pronunciation of letter sounds, and correct pencil grip starting at age 4.

- 7. What is your key takeaway?**

- 8. What questions do you still have?**

Optional reply: Families can learn more about early literacy and dyslexia by consulting the Resource pages in your handouts. (If you get a lot of questions that are difficult to answer, please reach out to DDMN and we can help answer those questions to relay back to the caregivers.

Email: [info@decodingdyslexiamn.org](mailto:info@decodingdyslexiamn.org).