



Early Literacy and Dyslexia Guided Notes

Decoding Dyslexia MN strives to _____, _____, and _____.

Up to _____% of the population has symptoms of dyslexia.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is an _____ when learning to read.

Myths and Truths

List the myths about dyslexia that surprised you:

Signs of Dyslexia in Early Childhood

List any signs of dyslexia you might recognize in your child or a family member.

Next steps I might take:

- Talk to my extended family about difficulties they may have had in school
- Follow Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota on Facebook
- Take the IDA Parent Screening Tool if I am concerned about signs of dyslexia in my family
- Visit the Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota website
- Practice early literacy skills at home as outlined by DDMN and Understood.org
- I am most interested in practicing these specific Early Literacy Skills at home:

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

- I plan to tell these three people what I learned about early literacy skills and dyslexia:

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

- Watch for signs my child may be struggling with early literacy skills now, or with reading, writing, and spelling in elementary school.

Could your struggling reader have dyslexia?



What is Dyslexia?

MN Statute 125A.01 states, "Dyslexia' means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words 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 the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota (DDMN) primarily works with the parents of struggling readers. Our vision is for students to have equitable literacy instruction that meets their educational needs so they can reach their full potential. Our mission is to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children, and improve resources for students with dyslexia in Minnesota's educational environments until all can read.

Educate

our community and schools on the significance of literacy needs and provide opportunities to learn through regular programming, workshops, and 1:1 support.

Advocate

to shape systems change to create learning environments founded in the science of reading in which every child has access to the tools they need to succeed in reading at grade level.

Empower

Parents and educators with information and resources to be part of a community approach centered around the child in supporting and meeting their needs with dyslexia and literacy struggles.

Free Support & Resources for Families

DDMN offers a free service, called Partners for Parents, to guide families of struggling readers in finding resources and learning how to advocate for their children. Our program offers online small group sessions with Q & A and one-to-one consultations. Services include, but are not limited to, knowledge building when new to dyslexia, where to find resources, how to prep for IEP or 504 meetings, review of IEPs and evaluations, understanding the various terms used, and how to prepare for transitions between school levels.



Find information on this program and additional resources on our website.



Decoding Dyslexia MN

Educate, Advocate, and Empower

www.DecodingDyslexiaMN.org @DyslexiaMN

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) non-profit grassroots organization supported by Minnesota families, educators, & professionals concerned with the limited access to educational interventions for students within educational environments.

Signs of Dyslexia

If a child has 3 or more of these signs, we encourage you to learn more about dyslexia.

In Preschool and Kindergarten

- Delayed speech
- Trouble creating words that rhyme
- Mixes up the sounds and syllables in long words (ex.: aminor for animal)
- Confusion of left versus right and other directionality words & concepts
- Trouble learning letter names and sounds
- Trouble identifying first or last sounds in words
- Trouble blending sounds into words
- Trouble getting words out, “The um, thing that, um...”
- A close relative with dyslexia
- Average or above average intelligence but difficult learning to read

In Elementary School

- Handwriting issues (dysgraphia)
- Slow, choppy, inaccurate reading
- Can read a word on one page, but won't recognize it on the next page
- Difficulty with spelling
- Often can't remember sight words or homonyms
- Dreads going to school

In Middle and High School

All of the above symptoms plus:

- Limited vocabulary
- Extremely poor written expression - large discrepancy between verbal skills and written compositions
- Poor grades in many classes
- May drop out of high school

Possible Dyslexic Strengths

- 3-D visual-spatial skills
- Intuitive, big picture thinker
- Artistic, athletic, or musical ability
- Mechanical or mathematical skills
- Intuitive, creative
- Story-telling talent, high vocabulary
- Interpersonal skills

Dyslexic Reading Mistakes

- Inaccurate reading of words in lists
- Can't sound out an unknown word
- Skips or adds small words: an, a, from, the, to, were, are, of
- Adds/skips letters: could-cold
- Mixes sequence of letters: who-how, lots-lost, saw-was
- Mixes similar words: house-horse
- Confuses b-d past 1st grade
- Confuses b-p, n-u, or m-w
- Substitutes words based on context: trip-journey, fast-speed
- Skips suffixes: need-needed, talks-talking, late-lately
- Reading comprehension may suffer
- Listening comprehension much better than reading comprehension

Dyslexic Spelling Mistakes

- Very poor spelling
- Forgets words after the spelling test
- May leave out vowels
- May spell phonetically: akshun = action, groth = growth
- Misspells sight words: gose = goes
- Trouble with homophones: there-their
- Misspells even when copying

Dysgraphic Writing Issues

- Handwriting is slow and messy
- Writing doesn't “sit” on the line
- Unusual spacing between words
- Difficulty copying from board
- Omits capitals and punctuation
- Run-on sentences
- Tells stories much better verbally than in writing

Additional Difficulties

- Analog clocks
- Addition and multiplication facts
- Learning to tie shoes
- Reading maps
- Learning address and phone number
- Sequences: Jan, Feb, Mar...
- Recalling names, dates, & places
- Learning foreign language
- Messy desk, backpack, bedroom
- ADHD and Dyslexia frequently occur together
- Difficulty reading printed music
- Difficulty mastering a foreign language

Educate, Advocate, and Empower

Visit www.DecodingDyslexiaMN.org and follow us on social media @DyslexiaMN
Signs of dyslexia reprinted with permission from Bright Solutions for Dyslexia, www.BrightSolutions.US



Dyslexia Resources

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota (DDMN) has lots of information on its website to help you learn about dyslexia and to assist you in identifying and helping your struggling reader. Our Facebook groups and social media platforms are great for learning about upcoming events and asking questions to other families also on this advocating journey.

Presentation: <https://www.decodingdyslexiamn.org/for-educators/>

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

Instagram & X: @dyslexiamn



Parent Screening Tool

Dyslexia is hereditary. This parent screening tool, provided by the International Dyslexia Association, is designed to measure the risk of a reading disability. One way to estimate the risk of a reading disability in preschool children is to evaluate their parents' own reading history, whether you knew you had a disability or not. Don't wait.



<https://dyslexiaida.org/screening-for-dyslexia/dyslexia-screener-for-preschoolers/>

Emily Hanford Podcasts

Emily Hanford is an educational journalist with America Public Media who has written award-winning articles and podcasts about why schools struggle to teach reading properly.

Hard Words - Why aren't kids being taught to read?

<https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2018/09/10/hard-words-why-american-kids-arent-being-taught-to-read>

At a Loss for Words - How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers

<https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2019/08/22/whats-wrong-how-schools-teach-reading>

Sold a Story - How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong

<https://features.apmreports.org/sold-a-story/>



International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

Find resources, referrals, webinars, and tutors.

<https://dyslexiaida.org>



What is Structured Literacy? (as defined by IDA)

Learning to read can be a significant challenge for students with dyslexia. Fortunately, this challenge usually CAN be overcome with effective reading instruction. Unfortunately, if not overcome, lifelong consequences can be harsh.

Popular reading approaches (e.g., Guided Reading or Balanced Literacy) are not effective for students with dyslexia because these approaches do not focus on the decoding skills struggling readers need to succeed.

Structured Literacy explicitly teaches systematic word-identification/decoding strategies. These benefit most students and are vital for those with dyslexia.

<https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>



Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity

General dyslexia information from Dr. Sally Shaywitz, Director

<https://www.dyslexia.yale.edu/>



“Children who can’t read at grade level by third grade are four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than those who are proficient in reading.” - Robert Balfanz, John Hopkins University study, 2011

“Students not proficient in reading by the beginning of third grade have only a 17% chance of catching up.” - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) study

“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).” - Gaab Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education



Early Literacy Resources

Read Aloud

Reading aloud to children helps expand their vocabulary and language skills. This helps them hear different styles of language use and they can learn about the world beyond their backyard, which makes it easier for them to grasp different concepts in the future.

Listen to other people read aloud at library programs or check out audio books for the car. Check out all kinds of books from the library and don't be afraid to read their favorites repeatedly.

Reading nursery rhymes helps children understand rhyming and predicting what's coming next.

Teaching the New Alphabet Song

This new variation of the alphabet song has different pauses to help keep each letter sound separate, so kids don't lump LMNOP or YandZ as one letter.

<https://youtu.be/28bQhlyZ3I8?si=FSAOHdArQAPJDDnF>



Teach Letter Sounds Properly

Helpful YouTube videos for parents to work on letter sounds at home! Watch out for adding an extra "uh" sound at the end of a letter sound.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=dBedHA6y90M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM2EJ50xkfU>

<https://youtu.be/vIN0HzzPWJY>



Teaching Pencil Grip

Kindergarten teachers will thank you if you can start to teach your child how to hold a pencil correctly. It will help with stability and comfort for when they are older and having to write longer assignments. If they learn how to grip the pencil incorrectly and are allowed to continue without correction, it is a hard habit to break. Improper pencil grip can also lead to messy writing and muscle fatigue in the hand, wrist, and arm.

https://youtu.be/K1v4wVaEGqA?si=-mBW_M_MxhPBGlcZ





Reading Skills at Different Ages

Babies (ages 0–12 months)

- Begin to reach for soft-covered books or board books
- Look at and touch the pictures in books
- Respond to a storybook by cooing or making sounds
- Help turn pages

Toddlers (ages 1–2 years)

- Look at pictures and name familiar items, like dog, cup, and baby
- Answer questions about what they see in books
- Recognize the covers of favorite books
- Recite the words to favorite books
- Start pretending to read by turning pages and making up stories

Preschoolers (ages 3–4 years)

- Know the correct way to hold and handle a book
- Understand that words are read from left to right and pages are read from top to bottom
- Start noticing words that rhyme
- Retell stories
- Recognize about half the letters of the alphabet
- Start matching letter sounds to letters (like knowing b makes a /b/ sound)
- May start to recognize their name in print and other often-seen words, like those on signs and logos

Kindergartners (age 5 years)

- Match each letter to the sound it represents
- Identify the beginning, middle, and ending sounds in spoken words like dog or sit
- Say new words by changing the beginning sound, like changing rat to sat
- Start matching words they hear to words they see on the page
- Sound out simple words
- Start to recognize some words by sight without having to sound them out
- Ask and answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions about a story
- Retell a story in order, using words or pictures
- Predict what happens next in a story
- Start reading or asking to be read books for information and for fun
- Use story language during playtime or conversation (like “I can fly!” the dragon said. “I can fly!”)

Younger grade-schoolers (ages 6–7 years)

- Learn spelling rules
- Keep increasing the number of words they recognize by sight
- Improve reading speed and fluency
- Use context clues to sound out and understand unfamiliar words
- Go back and re-read a word or sentence that doesn't make sense (self-monitoring)
- Connect what they're reading to personal experiences, other books they've read, and world events

Provided by Understood.org

More skills at older ages can be found at:

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/reading-skills-what-to-expect-at-different-ages>