

LBAT Getting Started Guide to Dyslexia

Definition

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features are difficulties in: phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.

Rose Review p.30-36

Key Facts

- 10% of the population are thought to be affected
- 4% may be severely affected
- Although some people suffer from visual stress, it does not necessarily indicate dyslexia
- Dyslexia is a learning 'difference', meaning that the brain approaches things in a different way
- People with dyslexia will have an individual profile of strengths and difficulties

Indicators include difficulties with:

- Phonological awareness: working with sounds, e.g. phonics
- Verbal/ short term memory: remembering and manipulating information presented orally
- Verbal processing speed: quick access to spoken information from memory
- Sequencing difficulties: remembering and following instructions and retaining facts and information
- Reading: decoding written words, and comprehension
- Spelling: identifying and using the sounds needed, identifying patterns in spelling
- Writing: retaining ideas, organising information on the page, speed of working

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Key strategies for support

- Work with the person to identify strategies which help them best, taking into account their learning styles, strengths and difficulties.
- Practise metacognitive approaches to encourage the person to persevere and recognise their achievements.
- Provide support that develops self-help skills, including working with peers.
- Use visual prompts to support understanding and retention, such as phonic mats, topic words, spelling lists with images.
- Develop skills in using images/ graphics to communicate ideas, such as mind-mapping.
- Provide opportunities for overlearning, and pre-teaching of vocabulary – ensure this is tailored to the person – they may need much more than you think.
- Give the big picture – make connections with prior learning.
- Use techniques such as “warming up the text” and paired reading to make written information more accessible.
- Develop phonological skills for spelling through structured teaching programs, identification of spelling patterns and overlearning.
- Provide support for planning writing, such as writing frames, ordering images and mind-mapping techniques.
- Provide word banks and consider personalised dictionaries.
- Consider and explore the use of assistive technologies to improve independence.

Useful links:

- <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/home/>
- <https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/>
- <https://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk/>

For additional information and support, contact your LBAT Advisory Teacher