
Common Warning Signs of Dyslexia: Pre-K to Grade 2

While dyslexia is most often formally identified in school-age children, signs of dyslexia can frequently be detected in preschoolers.

If you're concerned about your child, review the following checklist of common warning signs of dyslexia in children in pre-kindergarten to grade 2.

For at least the past six months, my child has had trouble:

Language:

- Learning the alphabet, numbers, and days of the week
- Naming people and objects
- Speaking precisely and using a varied, age-appropriate vocabulary
- Staying on topic
- Getting or staying interested in stories and books
- Learning to speak (delayed compared to his peers)



- Understanding the relationship between speaker and listener
- Pronouncing words correctly (Example: says “magazine” instead of “magazine”)
- Learning and correctly using new vocabulary words
- Distinguishing words from other words that sound similar
- Rhyming words
- Understanding instructions/directions
- Repeating what has just been said

Reading:

- Naming letters
- Recognizing letters, matching letters to sounds, and blending sounds when speaking
- Learning to read as expected for his/her age
- Associating letters with sounds, understanding the difference between sounds in words
- Accurately blending letter sounds within words
- Recognizing and remembering sight words
- Remembering printed words

- Distinguishing between letters and words that look similar
- Learning and remembering new vocabulary words
- Keeping one’s place – and not skipping over words – while reading
- Showing confidence and interest in reading

Writing:

- Learning to copy and write at an age-appropriate level
- Writing letters, numbers, and symbols in the correct order
- Spelling words correctly and consistently most of the time
- Proofreading and correcting written work

Social-Emotional:

- Making and keeping friends
- Interpreting people’s non-verbal cues, “body language,” and tone of voice
- Being motivated and self-confident about learning

How Is Dyslexia Identified?

Trained professionals can identify dyslexia using a formal evaluation. This looks at a person's ability to understand and use spoken and written language. It looks at areas of strength and weakness in the skills that are needed for reading. It also takes into account many other factors. These include family history, intellect, educational background, and social environment.

How Is Dyslexia Treated?

It helps to identify dyslexia as early in life as possible. Adults with unidentified dyslexia often work in jobs below their intellectual capacity. But with help from a tutor, teacher, or other trained professional, almost all people with dyslexia can become good readers and writers. Use the following strategies to help to make progress with dyslexia:

- Expose your child to early oral reading, writing, drawing, and practice to encourage development of print knowledge, basic letter formation, recognition skills, and linguistic awareness (the relationship between sound and meaning).
- Have your child practice reading different kinds of texts. This includes books, magazines, ads, and comics.
- Include multi-sensory, structured language instruction. Practice using sight, sound, and touch when introducing new ideas.

- Seek modifications in the classroom. This might include extra time to complete assignments, help with note taking, oral testing, and other means of assessment.
- Use books on tape and assistive technology. Examples are screen readers and voice recognition computer software.
- Get help with the emotional issues that arise from struggling to overcome academic difficulties.

Reading and writing are key skills for daily living. However, it is important to also emphasize other aspects of learning and expression. Like all people, those with dyslexia enjoy activities that tap into their strengths and interests. For example, people with dyslexia may be attracted to fields that do not emphasize language skills. Examples are design, art, architecture, engineering, and surgery.