

PARENT-TEACHER PANEL DISCUSSION:

Working Together to Address Dyslexia in the Classroom

Webinar Q&A

What is an IEP?

An IEP is an Individualized Education Program. Here's an overview: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/understanding-individualized-education-programs>

What is the advantage to using a 504 as opposed to IEP?

Here's a good summary of both in a side by side comparison: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>

You mention seeing a neuropsychologist. Would most pediatricians be informed enough about dyslexia to advocate for a referral to a neuropsych? Can I anticipate some push-back if I request a dyslexia diagnosis?

Some states have made dyslexia "diagnosis" only valid when it comes from a neuropsychologist or a doctor. Unfortunately, most doctors have had little or no training in assessing for dyslexia. Recently, there has been more pushback from researchers about this requirement because while dyslexia is neurobiological (neuro meaning brain-based and biological due to the heritability factor), there is neither a medical test for dyslexia or a medical treatment. Additionally, even when a doctor provides a dyslexia diagnosis, the school is not required to accept it. They can use this as one source of information to identify a learning disability in reading but the intervention will always be educational, not medical.

What is DIBELS?

DIBELS is an assessment used to measure the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. Many states use it to measure literacy skills in their schools.

I suspect many of my adult students have dyslexia. Do you have any teaching suggestions on how we can help these students within a class situation?

Research has shown that training or instructional materials that use a "structured literacy" or "explicit phonics" approach are best for students with dyslexia, but, they are also useful for every struggling reader. You can also use an online dyslexia screener to identify whether dyslexia could be the cause of their reading difficulties: <https://www.readinghorizons.com/dyslexia/dyslexia-resources/dyslexia-test/screener>

Do you know of any websites that have lesson plans or exercises using structured literacy and explicit phonics?

This blog post summarizes resources and information about helping students with dyslexia from Donell Pons: <https://www.readinghorizons.com/blog/support-students-with-dyslexia-at-school> ... it includes a list of websites and other useful resources as you look to support these students.

What is the name of the researcher that found fMRI differences? And what is the book that was mentioned?

Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz M.D.

Do you have any recommendations for teasing out disabilities versus language acquisition struggles? And/or the overlap?

One of our panelists recommends David Kilpatrick's book, Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties, to get a much richer overview of assessing reading issues.

This is a comment rather than a question. It is important to remember that an important marker of Dyslexia is also poor spelling and written expression skills. That may show up as a marker earlier than poor reading does.

What do you have for students who are ELL and have dyslexia?

Luckily, both ELL and students with dyslexia need the same type of reading instruction: explicit, systematic, sequential phonics instruction ... also known as "structured literacy" instruction.

I have concerns with interventions that pull students out of whole class instruction. Many schools put students in specialized reading classes, which don't challenge the intellectual abilities of students with dyslexia. Worse yet, the student misses out on enriching electives or other subjects which would further develop other critical skills. What are some best practices for in-class intervention? Where can a teacher find intervention resources?

Many schools use learning rotations where they can target the students that need additional reading help in one group and then provide more advanced reading practice for other students in a different group. Also, there are instructional software programs that can provide additional reading help and intervention that can be completed by students at home or during computer time.

What can a parent do when a school or teacher continues to recognize a student is struggling in reading/spelling and has dyslexic tendencies but won't help? What should I look for in a private tutor?

Sorry to hear that you've been getting that pushback! The most important thing is that the tutor use an explicit phonics (also known as "structured literacy") based approach to teach your child. You can also look up your local Decoding Dyslexia chapter to see if they have any recommendations for tutors in your area.

My state only screens kindergartners. What is the best screener for second and third grades?

Feel free to contact one of our specialists for additional recommendations, but here is a free one that can be used as an initial gauge: <https://www.readinghorizons.com/dyslexia/dyslexia-resources/dyslexia-test/screener>

Is there a way to send the replay to another professional (like a teacher or SPED teacher)?

Yes, you'll receive a link to the recording in the next 24 hours and you can forward it to anyone you would like :)

What is the name of the sequential systematic program that was mentioned?

Reading Horizons

Can this phonics program be used only in SPED if the school uses a different reading curriculum?

Reading Horizons is also widely used to supplement mainstream reading instruction.

Can this program be implemented online?

Yes, Reading Horizons has instructional software that is accessed online. Feel free to contact one of our reps for more information at 800.333.0054.