

Dyslexia: From Symptoms to Solutions

Dyslexia is not a disease to have and to be cured of, but a way of thinking and learning. Often it's a gifted mind waiting to be found and taught.

-Girard Sagmiller, "Dyslexia My Life"

Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz

Symptoms of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty linking letters with sounds
- Difficulty with multi-syllable words
- Fluency and rhythm of reading
- Poor spelling and handwriting
- Difficulties learning a foreign language
- Emotional pain

Dyslexia's effects on reading

- Trouble reading unfamiliar words
- Omitting parts of words when reading
- Fear of reading out loud
- Reading is slow and tiring
- A reliance on context to discern meaning
- Oral reading is choppy and labored
- Avoidance of reading for pleasure

Solutions

- Teach Orton-Gillingham Principles
- Multi-sensory, systematic, logical sequence

*Systematic phonics instruction has been used widely over a long period of time with positive results, and a variety of systematic phonics programs have proven effective with children of different ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds. These facts and findings provide converging evidence that **explicit, systemic phonics instruction is a valuable and essential part of successful reading program.***

-National Reading Panel Report

Types of Assessments

Reading Rates

Labels

As parents and teachers we are often hesitant to give our children or students certain labels. There can be a great deal of negative association with words such as *learning disability*, *Attention Deficit Disorder*, and *dyslexia*. Dyslexia is an important term to help identify children with reading difficulties and is one we need not shy away from. It is important for children to understand that their reading difficulties come from the way their brain is wired and not their intelligence level. **Giving a label gives an explanation and therefore can lead to a solution.**

Diana Hanbury King, a member of the International Dyslexia Association since 1951, stated in a recent article that when we use broader more in vogue terms such as auditory, visual, or fine-



motor processing disorders that “parents are often misled into treating what is misperceived as the problem and wasting both time and money.”

This is how Dr. Orton in his book *Reading, Writing, and Speech Problems in Children*, described the term dyslexia to a five-year-old: *dys* means problems and *lexia* means words, so *dyslexia* means problems with the words you speak, the words you hear, and the words you see. Children and adults are so excited to have a word for it—one that explains what is going on. Katherine Schantz, head of Delaware Valley Friends School, shares, “It’s just such a meaningful term and the kids understand that their brain works differently and feel relieved.” We should not be afraid of the term, the label, but embrace it, explore it, and discuss it with our children so that they can receive the correct help and begin to find success with words.

Book List

- *Overcoming Dyslexia*, by Sally Shaywitz
- *Right-Brained Children in a Left-Brained World*, by Jeffrey Freed, M.A.T., and Laurie Parsons
- *Helping Your Dyslexic Child*, by Eileen M. Cronin, Ph.D.
- *You Don’t Have to Be Dyslexic*, by Joan M. Smith

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