

Dyslexia and Characteristics of Dyslexia: An Introduction for Parents

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Agenda

- What do we mean when we say “characteristics of dyslexia”?
- What do we mean when we say “dyslexia”?
- What happens when my child is screened for “characteristics of dyslexia”?
- What happens when my child is evaluated for a specific learning disability?
- How do I make sure I’m asking for the right thing?
- How do students qualify for different support plans, and what does each provide to students?



What do we mean when we say...

Characteristics of Dyslexia?

Characteristics of Dyslexia

- Characteristics of dyslexia simply means your child has a pattern of deficits in foundational literacy skills commonly associated with dyslexia.
- Characteristics of dyslexia does **not** mean your child has a learning disability or has dyslexia.
- Characteristics of dyslexia means your child struggles with learning to read and spell words at the “word level” (i.e., not comprehension specific).
- Characteristics of dyslexia means your child needs systematic and explicit instruction in not just Tier I but also in tiered intervention through a dyslexia-specific intervention.



What do we mean when we
say...
Dyslexia?

Dyslexia

- Dyslexia in Tennessee is included under the umbrella category of specific learning disability in basic reading and/or reading fluency.
- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that affects a student's ability to learn to read and spell words at the word-level (i.e., not comprehension specific).
- A student is identified with a specific learning disability in basic reading and/or reading fluency (dyslexia) through an evaluation and an eligibility determination made by an IEP team.



What happens when...

my child is screened for characteristics of dyslexia?

Screening for Characteristics of Dyslexia

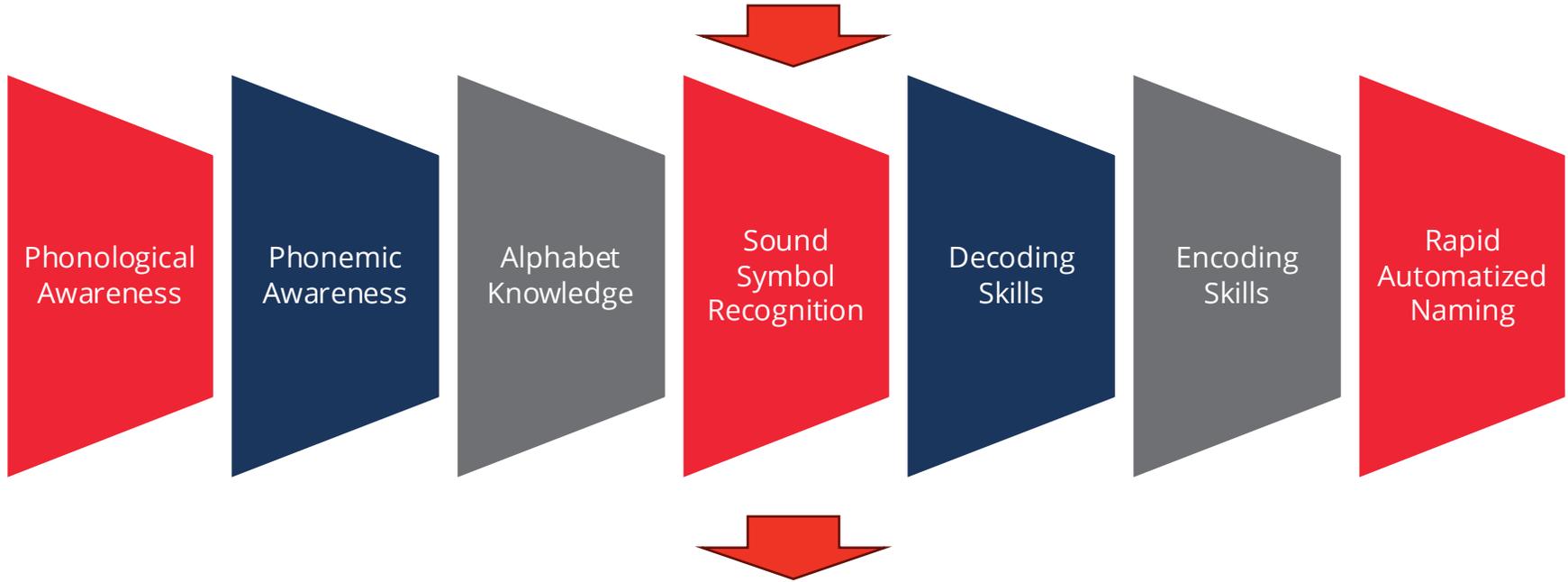
- Occurs through the universal screening process.
- All students with identified risk indicators are screened.
- Does not require parent consent, though parents can request screening.
- Can identify a student as having “characteristics of dyslexia.”
- Used to inform instructional and intervention supports.
 - Identification requires implementation of dyslexia-specific intervention.



Universal Reading Screener



Skills-Based, Grade-Appropriate Literacy Screening



Data-based Decision Making for Instructional and Intervention Supports

ACADEMICS



Dyslexia-Specific Interventions



- Dyslexia-specific interventions must meet the following criteria:
 - **Explicit** – skills explained, directly taught, and modeled by the teacher,
 - **Systematic and Cumulative** – introduces concepts in a definite, logical sequence; concepts are ordered from simple to more complex,
 - **Multi-Sensory** – links listening, speaking, reading, and writing together; involves movement and “hands-on” learning,
 - **Language-Based** – addresses all levels of language, including sounds (phonemes), symbols (graphemes), meaningful word parts (morphemes), word and phrase meanings (semantics), and sentence formation (syntax), and
 - **Aligned to Individual Student Need** – should address the skill deficit(s) identified through targeted assessments.

See T.C.A. § 49-1-229(f)(1)



ACADEMICS

What happens when...

my child is evaluated for a specific learning disability?

Evaluating for a Specific Learning Disability (IDEA/Special Education)

- A parent, teacher, or team has made a referral for special education based on a suspected disability.
- An IEP team convenes to discuss if they agree that a disability is suspected and requires an initial evaluation.
- If team agrees, the team has 60 days to complete evaluation and determine eligibility from the date they receive informed written parental consent.
- If team disagrees, team documents in a Prior Written Notice the reasons they do not suspect a disability and provides a copy to the parent.



See State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-09-.05(f);
34 C.F.R. § 300.301.

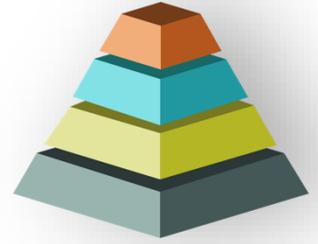
Evaluating for a Specific Learning Disability (IDEA/Special Education)

- Evaluation cannot be denied or delayed based on participation or length of time in RTI², number of data points, cut scores, or number of tiers student has participated in.
- Evaluation determinations cannot be made through the use of a single data source/point.
- IEP team determines the appropriate assessment domains for the evaluation.



34 C.F.R. § 300.304(b)(1);
U.S. Dept of Educ., *Memo to State Directors of Education* (January 21, 2011)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) under IDEA



- Only students who have a qualifying disability and need specialized instruction may have an IEP.



- Each program is specific to the student's needs and their deficit(s).
- The program is written by an IEP team including a variety of stakeholders required by the IDEA.
- Students who qualify may receive accommodations, modifications, related services, and services through an IEP.



“

Yes, you can say “dyslexia.” For identification purposes under IDEA, dyslexia will fall under specific learning disability (SLD) in basic reading and/or reading fluency.

How do I make sure I'm asking for the right thing?

Characteristics of dyslexia versus specific learning disability

How do I know which one to ask for?

- Do you notice your child is struggling to read and want additional screening to see if the student needs dyslexia-specific intervention within the general education RTI² setting?

Ask for characteristics of dyslexia screening.

- Do you suspect your child has a disability that may require special education?

Ask for an evaluation for a specific learning disability under IDEA.



Characteristics of Dyslexia

Deficits in foundational literacy skills

Risk indicators for reading struggle

Identified through the universal reading screening process using survey-level assessments and other student data

Needs can be met in general education setting

Evidence-based reading interventions and classroom-level supports

SLD in Basic Reading and/or Reading Fluency (Dyslexia)

Learning disability at the word-level for learning to read

Identified learning disability

Eligibility determination by an IEP team after special education referral and comprehensive evaluation

Requires specialized support that cannot be met through general education alone

Specially designed instruction and classroom and testing accommodations

What do different support plans offer?

How do students qualify for each?

Student Support Plans

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Student support plan for students who meet two-prong criteria under IDEA and are made eligible.

IEPs include adverse impact statements, present levels, goals, direct and related services, transition services (if applicable), and accommodations.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

Student support plan for students identified as English learners or students who are in year 1 or year 2 of exiting English as a Second Language Services.

ILPs include student data, needed English as a Second Language (ESL) services, instructional scaffolds, testing accommodations, goals, and for grade 4-12 career readiness.

Student Intervention Plan (including ILP-D)

Student support plan for students in tiered intervention within the general education RTI² framework.

SIPs include historical and present data profile, provided intervention and intervention history, and progress monitoring.

Individualized Learning Plans for characteristics of dyslexia (ILP-D) are a specific type of SIP.

Section 504 Plan

Student support plan for students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity who are made eligible through an evaluation process.

Section 504 plans can include accommodations, modifications, and related services as determined by 504 team.

Eligibility for an IEP under IDEA: Two-prong Eligibility

Student meets eligibility criteria

And, disability has an adverse impact on educational performance that cannot be met through general education supports alone



Outside Evaluations

- If parents obtain an outside evaluation on their own, the IEP team must ***consider*** the outside evaluation as part of the process.
- If a parent disagrees with the IDEA school-based evaluation, they are entitled to pursue an outside evaluation through an independent education evaluation (IEE). Any outside evaluation must then be considered by the team.





Eligibility for a Student Intervention Plan

- Any student that the school-based data team determines requires tiered intervention (Tier II or III) within RTI² should have a Student Intervention Plan.
- How these plans look may vary by district but should include the same basic information.





Eligibility for an Individualized Learning Plan for Characteristics of Dyslexia (ILP-D)

- ILP-Ds are a specific type of student intervention plan with particular qualifying criteria.
- ILP-Ds are intended for students with characteristics of dyslexia who require dyslexia-specific interventions within RTI² tiered intervention and also meet scoring criteria for the plan.



ILP-D Criteria

Criteria 1

The student must meet one of the following:

The student is in grades K - 3 and falls below the 25th percentile on the composite score on the Tennessee universal reading screener provided by the department or on a nationally normed, skills-based universal reading screener approved by the State Board of Education.

OR

The student is in grades 4 - 8 and falls below the 25th percentile on the composite score on a nationally normed, skills-based universal reading screener.

OR

The student is in grades 9 - 12 and the LEA's Early Warning System detects that the student may be at risk for a reading deficit.



Criteria 2

The student displays deficits in fifty percent (50%) or more of the grade-appropriate subtests identified by the state's Minimum Universal Reading Screening Matrix, which could include the following areas:

- Phonological awareness,
- Phonemic awareness,
- Sound-symbol recognition,
- Alphabet knowledge,
- Decoding skills,
- Rapid naming, or
- Encoding

Parent has the right to decline the ILP-D. Declining the ILP-D does not constitute a waiver of RTI² services.



Exceptions for Receiving an ILP-D



According to [Tennessee Department of Education Rule 0520-12-05-.04\(4\)\(b\)\(2\)](#), a student would **not** receive services through an ILP-D if:

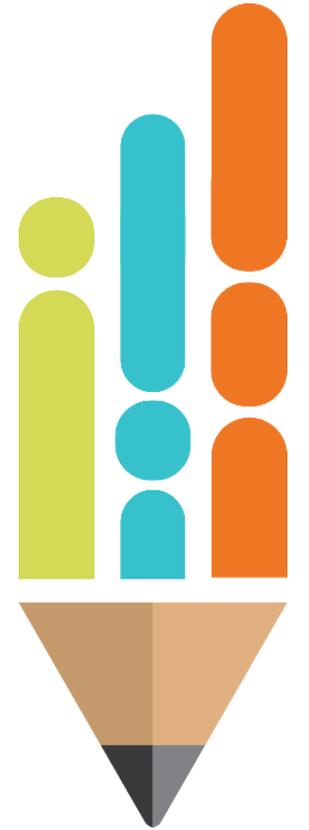
- the student with an ILP-D is subsequently determined eligible for special education and related services to support deficiencies in the area(s) of basic reading, reading fluency, or reading comprehension;
- the student has a primary or secondary eligibility category on the student's finalized IEP to support deficiencies in the area(s) of basic reading, reading fluency, or reading comprehension; or
- the student's parent declines an ILP-D.



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Eligibility for a Section 504 Plan

- Student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.
- Section 504 team determines eligibility after an evaluation is completed.



What does each plan provide?

IEP

1

- Specially designed instruction
- Classroom and testing accommodations
- Procedural safeguards under IDEA

ILP

2

- Student Data
- ESL Services
- Instructional Scaffolds
- Testing Accommodations
- Goals
- Grade 4-12 Career Readiness Section
- ILPs are also developed for exited ELs (Transition Year 1 and Year 2)

ILP-D

3

- Documentation of intervention plan within RTI²
- Record of instructional scaffolds and accommodations provided within the classroom setting

Section 504 Plan

4

- Accommodations
- Modifications
- Related Services
- Protections under Section 504

Students may qualify for more than one type of student support plan, depending on need.

What can you do as a parent?



How to understand what your child needs...

If your child is struggling with reading, talk to your child's teacher. Ask questions about their progress and performance. Focus on both areas of strength and areas of need.



How to ask for further testing...

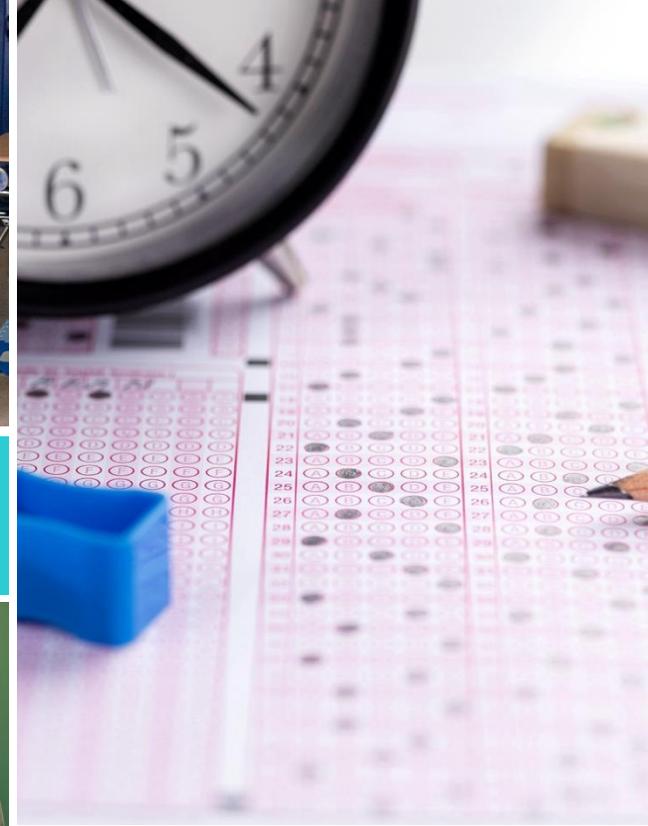
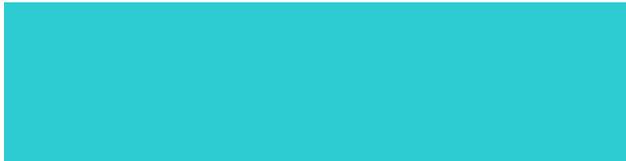
You can ask for screening for characteristics of dyslexia if you suspect your child is struggling with reading and requires more explicit help. If at any point you suspect your child has a disability, you can request a special education evaluation. If the team disagrees, the decision and reasons should be documented in a Prior Written Notice and provided to you. If the team agrees, an evaluation should be conducted.



How to find support...

Talk to your child's teachers and school. Capitalize on family resources and organizations designed to support parents. Understand your rights and advocate for your child.

Questions?





Thank You!

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