

COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF DYSPLEXIA

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WHAT IS DYSPLEXIA?

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“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

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Dyslexia is:

1. A specific learning disability
2. Neurological in origin
3. A brain difference
4. Characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition
5. A deficit in poor spelling and decoding abilities
6. A deficit in phonological component of language
7. Often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities

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Why don't schools "recognize" dyslexia?

Specific Learning Disability

- Broader category that encompasses different several disorders

Dyslexia

- A neurobiological condition which is characterized by weaknesses in phonological processing skills

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Areas of Specific Learning Disability

- Basic Reading Skills
- Reading Comprehension
- Reading Fluency Skills
- Math Calculation
- Math Problem Solving
- Listening Comprehension
- Oral Expression
- Written Expression



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HOUSE BILL 1031

MAY 23, 2012

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- Permitted students in grades 1-6 to receive a dyslexia scholarship to attend a public school other than the one to which assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a nonpublic school for students with a diagnosis of dyslexia.

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Special Purpose Schools

- Magnolia Speech School – Jackson
- New Summit School – Jackson
- North New Summit School – Greenwood
- South New Summit School – Hattiesburg
- Petal 3D School – Petal
- Gulf Coast 3D School – Ocean Springs

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Each local school district shall adopt a policy to ensure that all compulsory school-age children will be screened during the 2nd semester of kindergarten and during the 1st semester of first grade.



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House Bill 1046 2017

- Expanded eligibility for the Mississippi Dyslexia Scholarship to include students in grade 1 through grade 12
- Required local school districts to use a dyslexia screener from a list approved by the State Board of Education

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Dyslexia Screeners must assess the following areas:

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

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Mississippi Approved List of Dyslexia Screeners

- Amplify Screener
- Lexercise Mississippi Dyslexia Screener
- Mississippi College Dyslexia Screener: Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grade
- Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Association: Kindergarten and First grade

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When do you seek further evaluation?

- Child has failed the dyslexia screener
- Teacher recommends student
- Parental concerns



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PURPOSE OF AN EVALUATION



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- Identify intra-individual strengths and weaknesses
- To determine a diagnosis in order to receive appropriate services
- Obtain recommendations for accommodations

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COMPONENTS OF AN EVALUATION

Mississippi College Dyslexia Education and Evaluation Center
Based on Scottish Rites Model

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- Current hearing & vision (within one year)
- Parent interview
- Comprehensive case history
- Checklist identifying characteristics of dyslexia
- Assessment of cognitive ability
- Informal alphabet assessment
- Assessment of phonological processing skills
- Reading skills
- Math skills
- Spelling skills
- Written language skills
- Receptive and expressive language skills
- Co-existing complications

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PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSING

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Phonological
Awareness

Phonological
Memory

Rapid
Automatic
Naming



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WORKING MEMORY AND PROCESSING SPEED

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Students with working memory weaknesses often have trouble in:

- “Grabbing and holding on to” incoming information indicating they have less material to work with when they are performing a task
- Remembering multi-step directions
- Maintaining focus and concentration (underlies ADHD and dyslexia)
- Learning to read without hesitation because working memory is responsible for many of the skills children use to learn to read (auditory and visual memory)

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Students with processing speed weaknesses often have trouble with:

- Finishing tests in an allotted time
- Finishing homework in the expected time frame
- Listening or taking notes when a teacher is speaking
- Reading and taking notes
- Solving simple math problems in their head
- Doing written projects that require details and complex thoughts
- Keeping up with conversations

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Parents and teachers may notice that the child:

- Becomes overwhelmed by too much information at once
- Needs more time to make decisions or give an answer
- Needs to read information more than once for comprehension
- Misses nuances in conversation
- Has trouble executing instructions if told to do more than one thing at once

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Co-existing Complications

- Attention-related issues
- Visual-motor integration problems
- Auditory processing disorders



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Secondary Consequences

- Difficulties in reading comprehension
- Reduced reading experiences that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge



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TESTS ADMINISTERED

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- RIAS-2, WISC-V, Leiter-III (intelligence)
- Mississippi College Informal Alphabet Assessment (alphabetic principle)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, Second Edition (CTOPP-2)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Third Edition (WRMT-III)
- Gray Oral Reading Test, Fifth Edition (GORT-5)
- WIAT-III, WJ-IV (individual achievement tests to assess the math area)
- Test of Written Spelling, Fifth Edition (TWS-5)

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- Oral and Written Language Scales, Second Edition (OWLS-II) (assesses receptive and expressive language and written expression)
- CELF-5 Screening Test
- Conners 3 Rating Scales (Teacher and Parent Scales) (ADHD subjective screening)
- Continuous Performance Test, 3rd Edition (ADHD objective screening)
- WRAVMA, Beery VMI (visual motor integration)
- Fisher's Auditory Problems Checklist (auditory processing screener)

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DIAGNOSIS

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Application of a Definition-Based Process to the Identification of Dyslexia

1. Does the student demonstrate one or more of the primary reading characteristics of dyslexia, in addition to a spelling deficit?
2. Are the reading and spelling difficulties the result of a phonological processing deficit?
3. Are the reading, spelling, and phonological processing deficits unexpected? (Does the student demonstrate cognitive ability to support age level academic learning?)
4. Are there secondary characteristics of dyslexia evident in reading comprehension and written expression?
5. Does the student have strengths that could be assets? Are there coexisting deficits that may complicate identification and the response to intervention and may deserve further assessment and intervention?

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EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Factors that led to referral for an independent evaluation
2. Detailed explanation of scores
3. Instructional implications of scores obtained
4. Results of evaluation
5. Recommendations for options for programming (dyslexia therapy)
6. Recommendations for reasonable accommodations and support services

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WHAT'S NEXT?

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If a child is diagnosed with dyslexia:

- “The local school district shall make an initial determination of whether a student diagnosed with dyslexia qualifies under the IDEA to receive services and funding under the provisions of the IDEA before proceeding to the development of a 504 Plan for each dyslexic student eligible for educational services or equipment, or both under certain sections of the law.”
- “If a student’s diagnosis of dyslexia results in a determination that the disability is not a disability which would qualify the student as eligible under the IDEA, then in developing the written 504 Plan for each dyslexic student, there shall be an assumption that proficiency in spelling, reading, and writing are essential for the student to achieve appropriate educational progress.”

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OPTIONS FOR PARENTS

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Dyslexia therapy within the current educational placement (if available)

Private dyslexia therapy with accommodations within the general educational setting

Application for Mississippi Dyslexia Scholarship to transfer to an approved special purpose school (if therapy is not available in current placement)

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Is it true that everyone that “pays” for an evaluation receives a diagnosis?



300 children tested

82% diagnosed with Dyslexia

■ 6% ADHD, No Dyslexia

■ 14% Dyslexia & ADHD



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“Every child
would read if it
were in his
power to do so.”

~Betts, 1936



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