



SYMPTOMS OF DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that is characterised by a difficulty with reading and writing despite other indicators of intellectual competency. Dyslexia is diagnosed by an educational psychologist and requires the administration of intelligence tests and tests in literacy. It is one of the most common learning disabilities in English speaking countries. The exact causes of dyslexia are still not known, but it is NOT due to a lack of intelligence or a desire to learn. However, there does appear to be a genetic link. In addition, anatomical and brain imagery studies show that the brain of a person with dyslexia develops and functions differently to those people without dyslexia.

With appropriate teaching methods, dyslexics can learn successfully. Current research indicates that students with dyslexia learn best when they are exposed to a structured, explicit, systematic and phonic based program which incorporates a range of memory techniques and includes the development of phonological awareness and auditory processing skills.

Although dyslexia cannot be “cured”, early intervention can provide students with the tools required to achieve academic success. This in turn minimises many of the potential stresses associated with this learning difficulty and lessens the risk of the development of a poor self-concept and unproductive behaviour.

The Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation of WA (www.dyslexia-speld.com) lists the following characteristics as indicators of a child who may have dyslexia:

- difficulty learning the relationship between sounds and letters
- appears to forget instructions easily
- frequently misreads/misspells commonly occurring words
- has difficulty reading words quickly and accurately
- reads a word accurately on one line and then fails to recognise it further down the page
- has difficulty remembering how to spell words over time
- has difficulty applying spelling rules
- experiences literacy difficulties that are unexpected when compared to strengths in other academic, artistic or sporting areas
- often substitutes words that look similar when reading
- has difficulty comprehending what is read because of difficulties with word recognition
- tires easily and becomes distracted especially when expected to complete literacy tasks
- has a family member (or family members) with reading and writing difficulties
- reads slowly and without fluency

- experiences difficulty in playing with the sounds in words when rhyming, counting syllables and removing individual sounds
- often leaves literacy tasks unfinished
- struggles with reading and spelling particularly in comparison with peers
- puts in a great deal of effort but has little to show for it
- is not progressing at the expected rate despite extra assistance
- struggles for no apparent reason.

Whether or not your child has dyslexia, if he or she is struggling with reading, spelling or writing, it is important that your child received structured, systematic, multisensory, phonic based help as soon as possible. Learning is like an inverted pyramid. The sooner a learning problem is addressed, the less material a child needs to 'catch up on'.