

This resource was created by a learning disability advocate, Jacquelyn, who believes that more educators need to know the definition and signs of learning disabilities. Far too often students go throughout school with undiagnosed learning disabilities because people do not know how to spot the “warning signs.” If you would like to help change the narrative, please take time to look at the educational handout below. Remember to always treat your unique learners with respect, patience, inclusion, and compassion.

Definition of Dyslexia: Dyslexia is a language based learning disability that is neurological in origin. It mainly impacts reading fluency, reading comprehension, decoding speech-sounds, phonological awareness (the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words, including syllables, onset–rime, and phonemes), spelling words accurately, and understanding the parts of grammar.

Signs of Dyslexia:

1. Mixing up homophones (ex: Accept vs. except)
2. Re-reads sentences, words, or paragraphs in order to try and understand the meaning of the text
3. May skip words or sentences when reading by accident (trouble tracking on the page)
4. An individual may understand a task one day, but struggle with it the next time it occurs
5. Dyslexic’s do NOT see letters flipped however they may put letters in the incorrect order when writing (ex: “Now” as “Won”)
6. Has a hard time completing timed assignments
7. Directionality issues – left, right / before, after / up, down
8. Mispronounces multisyllabic words
9. Writes words how they phonetically sound, but does not remember the grammar rules.
10. Does not use the proper letter combinations for words – ou, oo, ir, ur, or, er, ea, ect.
11. Knowing what you want to say but having a hard time articulating it verbally or on the page
12. Writing may seem incohesive
13. Does not understand the rules of the English language

14. Difficulty following instructions
15. Poor reading fluency

Definition of Dyscalculia: Dyscalculia is a math learning disability that is neurological in origin. It mainly impacts mathematical calculations, reasoning, concepts, and situations.

Signs of Dyscalculia:

1. Trouble with basic math facts
2. Poor mental math
3. Has a hard time counting forwards and backwards
4. May understand a math concept one day and then forget it the next time they encounter it
5. Does NOT see numbers flipping in their brain but may write or say numbers in the incorrect order (ex: 64 as 46)
6. Can not tell time on an analog clock and gets confused by the phrases “half past”, “quarter of”, etc
7. Difficulties accurately paying for items and understanding coins
8. Forgets the order of multi-step equations
9. May not understand what a word problem is asking for and what operation to use (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division)
10. Gets confused with negative numbers and the rules of them
11. Behind in mathematics than peers their own age (may be in lower level math classes)
12. Uses fingers to count even at later ages and or always relies on a calculator
13. Poor visual and spatial orientation
14. Gets confused with directions (left and right)
15. Trouble recognizing patterns and sequences

Definition of Dysgraphia: Dysgraphia is a writing learning disability that is neurological in origin. Specifically, the disability causes a person's writing to be distorted or incorrect. The individual may make inappropriately sized and spaced letters and misspell words.

Signs of Dysgraphia:

1. Writing may not be in a straight line
2. Difficulty holding a writing tool
3. May not know when to use capital versus lowercase letters
4. May forget how to write certain letters
5. Has a hard time with grammar and punctuation
6. Words may appear to be in the incorrect order in the sentence
7. May leave out words in sentence
8. Illegible or messy handwriting
9. Avoids writing tasks or does not know how to start them
10. Can verbally say information but has a hard time writing it down
11. Spacing may be inconsistent or missing
12. Writing tasks may be slow to complete
13. May have a mix of print versus cursive handwriting
14. Frequently crosses out words or erases words multiple times
15. Inconsistent spelling of the same word even on the same page

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