



Dyslexia Guidelines Overview

(as per OCDE Dyslexia Guidelines)

The overall purpose of the Dyslexia Guidelines is to assist regular and special education teachers in identifying and assessing pupils with dyslexia at all grade levels so that we may provide them with appropriate services (AB 1369 CA Ed Code EC 56335 [a]).

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin, and is characterized by difficulties with word recognition, spelling and decoding. Resulting secondary consequences to learning may include problems with comprehension and reduction of reading experience, which may impede learning and growth.

In identifying students with dyslexia, the following information may be helpful: Dyslexia presents as difficulty with phonological processing – more simply stated, the understanding that spoken language can be divided into smaller units, such as sounds, words, and syllables. Students with dyslexia may exhibit characteristics such as inability to sound out new words or to read accurately or fluently, and may demonstrate limited sight vocabulary. They may present with unexpected deficits in relation to other cognitive abilities and show low response to otherwise effective classroom intervention or instruction. These students may also exhibit significantly higher comprehension when listening to information, as opposed to when reading the same information. Many students identified as dyslexic also have a history of dyslexia with someone in their family.

Some secondary difficulties experienced by students with dyslexia may include higher depression or anxiety than same age peers, as well as other social, emotional or mental health issues. If not identified, the student may be misunderstood and labeled as lazy, unmotivated, or even defiant.

Effective Educational Approaches for Teaching Students with Dyslexia

Effective approaches should be:

- Evidence based
- Multi-sensory
- Direct
- Explicit
- Structured
- Sequential

Proper intervention should include instruction in:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

NOTE: For middle and high school students who are required to read and comprehend denser, more complex text, it is recommended that phonics and fluency instruction focus heavily on morphology, and recognizing the meaningful parts of language such as syllables, affixes and roots.

The best practice is to address students' needs within the general population when possible, with parents also encouraging reading time and use of strategies at home as well. It is important for parents and school personnel to work together to insure students are receiving consistent instruction.

All instruction and intervention must also be combined with consistent and accurate data collection and analysis, in order to assess the efficacy of the programs or strategies being implemented.

Identification of, and intervention for students with dyslexia should include a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). All students should receive instruction and intervention in the form of strategies to be used in the regular education classroom. It's estimated that approximately 15% of students will require some intervention, still within the regular education setting, and roughly 2-5% may require special education or pull-out services. MTSS planning for a student or students should include the following members on the team: Administrators, school psychologists, regular and special educators and resource specialists, and speech and language specialists.

Although these guidelines are not legally binding, they are designed to insure that ALL students have access and can benefit from quality reading instruction, and that teachers are fully equipped to address reading and literacy needs in their classrooms.