

# Early Signs and Symptoms of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities



Children who struggle with reading find the demands of school to be overwhelming. Identifying the signs of a Reading Disability (or dyslexia, as it is commonly called) is an important first step in helping a child in this area. It is imperative to provide extra help even if a child does not meet the criteria for a diagnosis of dyslexia but finds reading to be difficult. As a cautionary note, many children are slow-to-develop readers who simply take a while to get going. It is important that parents do not panic if their first grader is simply reading slowly or sometimes forgets words he knew the previous week. The most pressing consideration for these children would be to have them practice reading and develop a love for books. Specialized reading programs through an IEP, RTI plan, or tutoring are often necessary for children with more serious reading issues.

Look for these issues if you are concerned about dyslexia:

## A. Early Warning Signs of Dyslexia

1. Delays in speaking (no words until 13+ months, no phrases until after 3 years)
2. Difficulty with pronunciation
3. Delays in knowledge of alphabet by the age of 3
4. Not appreciating rhymes by the age of 4 to 5

## 5. Difficulty in word finding

### **B. Preschool and Kindergarten**

1. Age 4: Lack of recognition of letters
2. Age 5: Problems associating sounds to words
3. Preschool Age: Not knowing how to spell his name
4. Kindergarten – 1st Grade:
  - a. Early difficulties in awareness of letters to sounds
  - b. Failure to understand how words come apart by syllables such as the word “baseball” or by phonemes

### **C. Grade 1**

1. Inability to read common simple words such as “bag” or “hop”
2. Complains about how hard reading is
3. Avoids reading
4. Family history of dyslexia
5. Family history of reading difficulties
6. Look for strengths in other areas that may highlight the weaknesses in reading. For example, a child might be very imaginative and curious and may display good problem-solving skills, particularly with his hands or when building things.
7. May comprehend stories that are read to him but has difficulty when he needs to read them.

### **D. Early Reading Grade Two and Above**

1. Mispronounces complicated or unfamiliar words, often

leaving out parts of words or confusing the order of the words, for example, "organics " as opposed to "organize."

2. Uses slang words.

3. Displays poor word finding.

4. Confuses words that sound alike such as "tornado" for "volcano."

5. Slow in responding to questions or verbalizations.

6. Struggles to remember an isolated piece of verbal information such as dates or numbers.

7. Is slow in acquiring reading strategies.

8. Often makes guesses in his word reading.

9. Often misses function words such as "on" or "in."

10. Omits parts of words while reading.

11. Has a fear of reading out loud and reads choppily and in a labored fashion when reading aloud.

12. Understands words in context rather than reading isolated words.

13. Has difficulty completing tasks on time.

14. Substitutes words with the same meaning for words he cannot pronounce such as "cars" for "automobiles."

15. Displays poor spelling.

16. Displays slow, tiring, and laborious reading and homework.

17. Has difficulty with foreign languages.

18. Shows no enjoyment in reading or reading for pleasure.

19. Has strengths in higher-level thinking processes that are evident in other areas but not when it comes to reading.

Here are some great resources to learn more about how to help kids with reading difficulties and dyslexia.

[Sound & Letter Time: Building Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition Through Purposeful Learning Disabilities 10](#)