

Dyslexia: A Specific Learning Disability

USOE Specific Learning Disability Definition (§300.8(c) (10))
Utah uses the federal definition for specific learning disability (SLD)

International Dyslexia Association (IDA) & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Definition of Dyslexia (2002) retrieved 1-31-13 at, IDA.org

A disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using **language**, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, **dyslexia** and developmental aphasia, that affects a student's educational performance.

“Specific learning disability” does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

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.

Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, Nov. 12, 2002. This Definition is also used by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Note: Blue print indicates alignment across USOE Special Education Rules, International Dyslexia Association and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Dyslexia; A Specific Learning Disability

What is dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a broad term that is used to describe a difficulty with reading. The word is a Greek term “dys” (meaning poor) and “lexia” (meaning words). The term therefore means “difficulty with words”. According to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), 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.¹
- IDEA and the Utah Special Education Rules include dyslexia in the definition of a **specific learning disability** with a disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using **language**, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, **dyslexia** and developmental aphasia, that affects a student’s educational performance, (USOE, 2008).

The definitions referring to dyslexia provided by USOE, IDEA and IDA address difficulties in learning to read and write. Recommended strategies for remediating these types of learning difficulties are consistent across organizations.

What does this mean?

- **For parents and educators:**
 - Dyslexia is not due to intelligence or a lack of effort or desire to learn.
 - The impact of Dyslexia for each student depends on the severity of the condition.
 - The most common effects are difficulty with reading, spelling, and writing.
 - Dyslexia occurs in people of all backgrounds and intellectual abilities.
 - Many people with Dyslexia are very bright and often talented in areas that do not require strong language skills.²
- Districts and Charter Schools in Utah use the recommendations from Utah’s 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction, the National Reading Panel and Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (ESEA/NCLB and IDEA 2004) to teach reading and identify students who are struggling readers.

¹ IDA 2002, 2008

² Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), November 2012

- **Utah's 3 Tier Model:**

1. **Tier 1**-Core Classroom Instruction for all students utilizing scientifically based reading research (SBRR) to teach critical elements outlined in the Utah Core standards(most students will demonstrate proficiency with effective Tier 1 instruction).
2. **Tier 2**-Provides supplemental targeted instruction in addition to Tier 1, and addresses the specific needs of students who do not make adequate progress in Tier 1. Tier 2 interventions should be targeted, scientifically based and aligned with core classroom instruction.(Approximately 10-15 percent of students will require Tier 2 instruction, the duration of the instruction varies dependent on student assessment and progress monitoring data, and is generally provided by the classroom teacher).
3. **Tier 3**- Intensive targeted intervention to the most at-risk readers, those who have not responded adequately to Tier 2 instruction. This small percentage (3-5 percent) of students usually has severe reading difficulties and requires instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet their individual needs. This intervention is extended over a longer period of time, and its form varies based on student assessment and progress monitoring data. Tier 3 intervention replaces Tier 2 instruction and is delivered by a specialist.

- **Student movement through the Tiers:**

Student movement through the 3 Tiers is a fluid process based on student assessment data and collaborative team decision. At any time during this process, a student may be referred for consideration for a 504 plan and/or special education evaluation. Additional supports may be necessary in any of the tiers to provide extra practice and support to help students maintain benchmark progress.³

- The National Reading Panel identifies five big ideas in beginning reading, they are:

1. **Phonemic Awareness**-(initial sound fluency)
2. **Phonics/Alphabetic Principle**-(letter sound correspondence and the ability to blend letters into words, vowel patterns)
3. **Fluency with Text**-(Accuracy and fluency with connected text)
4. **Vocabulary**-Contextual Analysis-infer or predict a word from context and Morphemic Analysis-meanings inferred by examining parts, i.e. prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc.)
5. **Comprehension**-(Retell Fluency)⁴

³ Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction

⁴ Nationalreadingpanel.org

What is appropriate Reading Instruction?

- Both ESEA/NCLB and IDEA 2004 emphasize the provision of appropriate reading and math instruction. Essential components of reading instruction are defined in section 1208(3) of the ESEA/NCLB as “...explicit and systematic instruction in”
 1. **Phonemic Awareness**
 2. **Phonics**
 3. **Vocabulary Development**
 4. **Reading fluency, including oral reading skills**
 5. **Reading Comprehension strategies**
 - In addition, both ESEA/NCLB and IDEA 2004 both require the provision of reading and math instruction that is based on “scientifically based research.”⁵

How is progress in reading monitored?

- The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) recommends the use of DIBELs (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) for screening, progress monitoring and outcome evaluation of students learning to read. In accordance with S.B. 150 (2010) Reading Requirement for Student Advancement and R277406 K-3 (7-1-2012) Reading Improvement Progress and State Reading Goal.
 - **Screening**-Designed as a first step in identifying children who may be at risk for delayed development or academic failure and in need of further diagnosis of their need for special services or additional reading instruction.
 - **Diagnostic**-Helps teachers plan instruction by providing in depth information about student’s skills and instructional needs.
 - **Progress Monitoring**-Determines through frequent measurement if students are making adequate progress or need more intervention to achieve grade-level reading outcomes.
 - **Outcome**-Provides a bottom line evaluation of the effectiveness of the reading program in relation to established performance levels.⁶

In Addition, USOE supports the established reading clinic at the University of Utah to assist educators and parents statewide in identifying and providing interventions for struggling readers, through UCA 53 A-3-402.10. The Reading Clinic provides services on site at the University of Utah and through remote access interactive technology to reach educators, parents and students throughout the state.⁷ (<http://www.uurc.utah.edu/>)

⁵ University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency, 2011

⁶ University of Oregon, 2012

⁷ Reading Clinic, University of Utah, 2001

How are specific learning disabilities, including Dyslexia, identified?

- If a student is identified through the screening and diagnostic process as a struggling reader, teachers and schools must provide specific interventions in reading targeted to the individual student's area of need.
 - After interventions have been implemented, teachers and school teams review the data through progress monitoring to determine if the student is making sufficient progress toward grade level benchmarks.
 - All public schools (districts and charters) are required under IDEA to identify, locate and evaluate students who are suspected of having disabilities, including reading disabilities. This process is called "child find" (§300.109 and §300.111).
 - If a student is not progressing at the appropriate rate, a school team can make a referral to have the student evaluated for a disability under IDEA guidelines.
 - A student can be identified as a struggling reader, but not meet the eligibility criteria as having a specific learning disability in reading under the IDEA guidelines.
 - If a student is identified as having a disability in reading under IDEA guidelines, then an IEP is developed. The IEP addresses the student's Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAPF), identifies individual goals and specially designed instruction needed for the student to progress toward his/her individual goals.
- Utah supports three methods that a local education agency (LEA) may use to determine eligibility for special education in the area of specific learning disabilities:
 - Response to Intervention (RTI) (Method A)
 - Discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability (Method B)
 - Combination of RTI and Discrepancy (Method C)
 - **Method A:** A process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention, hereafter referred to as Method A-RTI.
 - RTI is defined as "the practice of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs and using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions"⁸. Prior to use of the data from a response to scientifically based intervention as part of eligibility determination of SLD, RTI should be fully implemented as an instructional practice within the school.
 - With the use of universal screening, data collection, diagnostic assessments, and ongoing progress monitoring, school teams can identify students who may need additional assistance. The data must support the presence of a disability and the need for specialized instruction.
 - **Method B:** Identification of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement.
 - Using approved, standardized norm referenced assessments. (<https://estimator.srlonline.org>)

⁸ NASDE, 2006, p.5 (USOE SLD Guidelines, 2008)

- The discrepancy report is one data source that is to be considered along with all other evaluation data collected.
- **Method C:** A combination of A and B.⁹
- More information about the evaluation process can be found in chapter 2 of the Utah Special Education Rules: <http://www.usoe.gov>
- **.How do schools provide support for students identified with a learning disability including Dyslexia?**
 - All students, including students with specific learning disabilities, benefit from systematic, explicit instruction in reading writing and language. Instruction for individuals with reading and related learning disabilities should be:
 - Intensive: given frequently.
 - Explicit: directly taught and modeled by the teacher (limiting the process of student guessing and practicing errors).
 - Systemic and cumulative: has a definite, logical sequence of concept introduction.
 - Structured: has step by step procedures in place for introducing, reviewing and practicing concepts.
 - Multisensory: links listening, speaking, reading and writing together (visual, auditory, tactile).

What can parents do?

- Talk often with your child to build listening and speaking skills.
- Read to and with your child; help build vocabulary and comprehension skills by talking about the meaning of the story.
- Tell stories of your childhood, encourage your child to tell stories.
- Ask your child's teacher how you can help your child practice at home what she/he is learning at school.¹⁰
- Communicate with your child's general education teacher regarding any concerns.
 - Work closely with your child's school team to develop an intervention plan.
 - Keep your expectations high
 - Continue the dialogue with your child
 - Develop a file of resources
 - Have a sense of humor
 - Keep ongoing communication with your child's teacher
- Help your child develop his/her organization skills.
- Teach your child to advocate for themselves and use their best method to learn and express themselves (visual, auditory or tactile).¹¹

⁹ USOE SLD Guidelines, 2008

¹⁰ National Institute for Literacy, 2006

¹¹ Managing your Child's Education: Creative and Smart Ideas, Cindy Haines, Ed.M., Learning Specialist, 1997

A Research-Based Comparison of Recommended Practice For Teaching Literacy

	Utah Literacy Model USOE (2012)	USOE Special Education Specific Learning Disability Guidelines (2008)	International Dyslexia Association Fact Sheets, (2002- 2010)
Curriculum	Oral language, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing	High quality, research-based instruction delivered by qualified staff in the general education setting. RTI is based on the premise that most (80 percent or more) students can achieve if the core instructional process (i.e., program and instructional strategies) is research-based and delivered by qualified staff. Therefore, the foundation to any RTI or multi-tiered approach is dependent upon a <u>strong core curriculum</u> . This is often referred to as Tier 1.	Phonological awareness, vocabulary development, reading comprehension skills, Beginning and advanced decoding skills with spelling, reading fluency, grammar, and written composition
Assessment	Screening, Diagnostic Assessment, Progress Monitoring, Outcome	Use of assessment for three different purposes (Universal screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring) If a problem is suspected; a comprehensive evaluation with parental consent may be conducted.	Screening, diagnostic, outcome and progress monitoring
Instructional Delivery Effective Instruction	Highly trained professional staff, adequate time, flexible grouping, explicit and systematic instruction, use of data to inform instruction	Highly trained and highly qualified instructional staff, using direct, systematic and explicit instruction with higher rates of frequency, duration and intensity. Flexible grouping-large too small.	Studies support highly trained and skilled instructors, duration and intensity of instructional delivery, explicit, systematic, multisensory and cumulative approach.
High Quality Instructional Materials	Basal reading program decodable text, narrative/expository text, text at appropriate instructional level, quality literature	Research/evidence based programs aligned to the Core Curriculum, with targeted interventions individualized to student need based on data. Differentiated instruction using multiple modes or representations (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)	Research based or evidence based programs with strong sequential, multisensory, structured language programs that integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing.
Environment	High expectations, engaged practice, home support/practice, coordinated library media, technology, print-rich environment	High expectations for student achievement, high rates of student engagement, coordinated support across school settings and open communication between home and school	High Expectations, with multisensory learning experiences

<p>Family Literacy</p>	<p>Daily family reading, daily shared conversations, role model of parental reading and writing, frequent visits to the library</p>	<p>Systematic and regular parent/family involvement and communication Schools using a multi-tiered approach communicate regularly with families. Families are provided information that describes the multi-tiered process so they understand that students will receive instructional supports based on their individual instructional needs. Progress monitoring data is shared with families on a regular basis so they are aware of their child's performance and progress in the general curriculum.</p>	<p>Educate yourself, Create a notebook of your child's work, Keep your expectations high, Visit your child's classroom, Keep a file of potential references, Be patient on days off, Read aloud daily to your child, Start a dialogue with your child, Let your child be an expert, Have a sense of humor., (IDA; <i>Managing your Child's Education: Creative and Smart Ideas</i>, Cindy, Haines, Ed.M., Learning Specialist)</p>
<p>Intervention and strategies</p>	<p>Additional support, extended learning, supplemental services, differentiated instruction</p>	<p>Scientifically, research based interventions and instruction, use data to make decisions, use problem solving model to make decisions within a multi- tiered framework of support.</p>	<p>Small group instruction using a 3 Tiered approach. Where all students receive instruction in Tier 1, students who are struggling are placed in Tier 2 for remediation and students considered "treatment resisters" or students with potential learning disabilities are placed in Tier 3</p>

Note: Blue print indicates alignment across Utah Literacy Model, USOE; SLD Guidelines and International Dyslexia Association Recommendations

Resources

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