

# How to Tell if a **SECONDARY SCHOOL** Child may be At-Risk for Dyslexia

Do you have a child or student who puzzles you, displaying well-developed skills and abilities in some areas and unexpected difficulties in others? Complete this checklist to determine if that child could be at risk for dyslexia. (Page 1 of 2)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>BACKGROUND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ family history of literacy learning problems</li> <li>○ seems bright and capable but not making expected progress</li> <li>○ may excel in debating, drama, art, sport, technology, computing.</li> </ul> <p>Compared to their age peers dyslexic students often display difficulties in the following areas:</p> <p><b>READING DIFFICULTIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ is a slow and labored reader</li> <li>○ dislikes reading aloud</li> <li>○ difficulty decoding unfamiliar words according to alphabetic principles</li> <li>○ relies on a visual 'look and say' approach to reading</li> <li>○ uses the context of the story and flow of language to identify words</li> <li>○ tends to confuse words that look alike (e.g., was/saw, for/from, the/that, unclear/nuclear)</li> <li>○ mis-reads, omits or adds small function words (e.g., the, an, of, this, etc.) and word endings</li> <li>○ misses a line or repeats the same line twice</li> <li>○ misreading which undermines comprehension</li> <li>○ difficulty pinpointing the main idea in a passage</li> <li>○ difficulty using dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias</li> </ul> <p><b>SPELLING AND WRITING DIFFICULTIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ disparity between spoken and written language</li> <li>○ trouble getting thoughts down on paper</li> <li>○ difficulty planning and organizing written work</li> <li>○ written work appears disjointed</li> <li>○ difficulty with punctuation and grammar</li> <li>○ frequent spelling mistakes</li> <li>○ phonetic spelling (e.g., <i>anxiety</i> - <i>angsiaty</i>)</li> <li>○ spells the same word differently in one piece of work (e.g., <i>more</i>, <i>mor</i>, <i>moor</i>)</li> <li>○ confuses similar looking letters (e.g., b/d, m/w)</li> <li>○ produces untidy written work (i.e., lots of cross outs, poorly set out)</li> <li>○ writes slowly and has difficulty completing written work on time</li> <li>○ problems copying notes at speed and taking notes in lessons</li> </ul>	<p><b>MEMORY DIFFICULTIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ difficulty remembering instructions</li> <li>○ overwhelmed by large volumes of verbal information</li> <li>○ misunderstands complex instructions</li> <li>○ memory difficulties which affect the recall of learned facts in exams</li> <li>○ difficulty learning foreign language vocabulary</li> <li>○ difficulty remembering basic number facts and tables</li> <li>○ trouble doing mental calculation at speed</li> </ul> <p><b>DIFFICULTY MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL DEMANDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ difficulty organizing life around a timetable</li> <li>○ is often in the wrong place at the wrong time</li> <li>○ forgets which books to bring to class</li> <li>○ difficulty organizing homework and completing assignments on time</li> <li>○ overwhelmed by the amount and complexity of the tasks at this level</li> </ul> <p><b>SPEECH DIFFICULTIES</b></p> <p>Dyslexic children typically have well-developed oral language skills but display specific speech problems, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ word finding problems – has trouble finding the exact words wanted and so uses non-specific words (e.g., thing, stuff, junk, etc.)</li> <li>○ difficulty pronouncing multi-syllable words (e.g., <i>statistical</i>, <i>preliminary</i>, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ suffers poor confidence and low-self-esteem</li> <li>○ displays frustration</li> <li>○ employs work avoidance tactics</li> <li>○ becomes withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating</li> <li>○ acts as the class clown or is disruptive to mask difficulty coping with schoolwork.</li> </ul>
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Do you have a child or student who puzzles you, displaying well-developed skills and abilities in some areas and unexpected difficulties in others? Complete this checklist to determine if that child could be at risk for dyslexia. (Page 2 of 2)

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## ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- works more slowly than other students
- has problems working under time pressure, e.g., exams
- is able to do one thing at a time but has trouble with 'multi-tasking'
- obvious good and bad days with no apparent reason

Students with dyslexia may also display the following:

## ATTENTION PROBLEMS

- has trouble sustaining attention on schoolwork
- tires easily because of the amount of concentration and effort required to cope