

Dyslexia, the Law, and You!

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Presentation Outline

- Part One: Importance of proper evaluation
- Part Two: Dyslexia laws across states
- Part Three: A vision for the future
- Questions

Part One: Importance of Proper Evaluation

- Individuals with dyslexia need to be evaluated properly because the interventions they need are targeted and specific.
- The definition of dyslexia varies widely, but we know that it is a neurological disorder that affects reading and spelling skills. Interventions should focus on building these skills or allowing for oral language development and other content area knowledge is accessed despite difficulties in reading.
- Initially, vocabulary and oral language skills develop normally, but these may become affected due to lack of reading.
- An accurate, early diagnosis ensures that children with dyslexia receive interventions that match their deficiencies.
- We need to differentiate between different groups of struggling readers (e.g. ELLs, SLI, multiple disabilities, memory deficits, etc.)

An example that illustrates the different needs of two groups who experience difficulties with reading

Teaching Strategies for Positive Outcomes

Students with Dyslexia

Basic phonics

Word processing technology

Books on tape

The ability to show knowledge orally

One-on-one instruction

Early reading and spelling skills

Both

Multisensory activities

Opportunities for Positive transference

Vocabulary building

Motivation

ELLs (without Dyslexia)

Reading and writing Practice

More exposure to reading

Challenging activities

Scaffolding

Time

Importance of Proper Evaluation

- With progress monitoring, we keep track of children who struggle with reading; however, we need to pinpoint the reason for reading failure to provide the best interventions that will lead to a positive outcome.
- Children with dyslexia need:
 - Instruction in phonological awareness
 - Reading fluency
 - Early reading and spelling skills (regardless of their age)
 - The ability to access and express language and content area information without reading (i.e. via technology, alternate instruction, and accommodations)
- Unfortunately, the lack of consistency in the law across the US is preventing students with dyslexia from receiving these interventions

Part Two: Dyslexia Laws Across States

- As of July of 2012:
 - Dyslexia laws in the USA (Youman & Mather, 2012) [doi: DOI 10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2) provides a table summary.
 - 22 states had statewide **dyslexia laws**, three of which provide a dyslexia handbook to inform parents and educators about the proper procedures for students in public and private educational settings.
 - An additional three states have drafted a **dyslexia handbook** to provide resources and guide school personnel and parents in both identification and intervention for children with dyslexia.
 - Of the remaining states, six have **laws making their way through the legislature**, and two have tried to increase dyslexia awareness through creation of a **dyslexia week and dyslexia month**.
 - The laws focus primarily on: **definitions and terminology, early screening, identification, provision of interventions and accommodations, and eligibility for services.**

Four states that demonstrate the spectrum of inconsistency

Table 1

US Dyslexia Laws, Proposed Bills, and Initiatives

STATE	LAW/PURPOSE	STATUS	HANDBOOK	OTHER
AZ	None		None	None
MS	Amendment to 37-23-15, Mississippi Code Of 1972 (1997): Pilot programs for testing certain students for dyslexia	Passed	Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook	
	HB 1494: Funds for educator training, including dyslexia	Passed		
	HB 1031 (2012): Allows students enrolled in schools that do not have dyslexia programs to transfer to a different school or district.	Pending		
NJ	AB 811 (2010): Provides for instruction in dyslexia awareness and methods of teaching students with dyslexia for candidates for teaching certificates and current teachers and paraprofessionals	Pending	None	None
	AB 880 / SB 2400 (2008-2009): New Jersey Reading Disabilities Task Force	Passed		
TX	SB 867 (2011): Adult testing accommodations for a person with dyslexia taking a licensing examination administered by a state agency	Passed	Texas Dyslexia Handbook	Dyslexia Day
	SB 866 (2011): Education of public school students with dyslexia, the education and training of educators who teach students with dyslexia, and the assessment of students with dyslexia attending an institution of higher education	Passed		
	Texas Education Code (TEC) § 38.003: Screening and treatment	In TX Law		
	Texas Education Code §28.006: Diagnose reading in K-2	In TX Law		
	Texas Education Code §7.028(b): Compliance with dyslexia law	In TX Law		
	Texas Administrative Code §74.28: Districts to provide procedures for identification; adherence to dyslexia handbook; purchase program for students w/dyslexia	In TX Law		
	Texas Occupations Code Chapter 403: Licensed dyslexia practitioners and therapists	In TX Law		

The experiences of children with dyslexia across three states



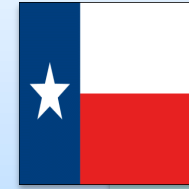
Arizona

- In AZ, the term dyslexia is not recognized; therefore the only possible label is LD (often with a 22 point discrepancy between achievement and IQ)
- No accommodations
- No interventions
- If LD, interventions are general
- Lack of school-world transition support



Mississippi

- In MS, many schools follow an RTI model. Thus, children with dyslexia are identified as readers who are falling behind
- Accommodations and interventions that are provided for all students who show reading delays
- Teachers, parents, and general public have access to a dyslexia handbook
- Parents may choose to move their children to a school with better dyslexia interventions



Texas

- Screening for dyslexia is the law
- Children with dyslexia are identified early ensuring that they receive early interventions
- Districts and schools are held accountable for their compliance with dyslexia laws
- Dyslexia intervention programs are available at all schools
- Trained dyslexia therapists and practitioners provide services
- Support for school-world transition

So, should all students with dyslexia move
to Texas?

No

Part Three: A vision for the future

What can we do to help our states improve dyslexia laws and policies?

- Review your state's current laws and policies
- Check your school's policies
- Learn about what other states are doing
 - [Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#)
- Take action! A bill can be drafted by anyone if there is enough support
- Find local professors, researchers, and other people in academia and suggest that they form a task-force

Suggestions for initiating change

Table 5

Proposing Dyslexia State Laws and Initiatives

LAW/INITIATIVE	SUGGESTIONS
Screening for Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form committee or task force of professionals knowledgeable about dyslexia 2. Propose a pilot program to determine cost, time, and procedure for dyslexia screening in public K-12 schools. Example: OH HB 96 (2011-2012) 3. Determine timeline for pilot program and indicate date of final report 4. Present findings of pilot program in report and draft bill for universal screening for dyslexia. 5. Include specifications for special populations (e.g. ELLs, students with multiple disabilities, etc.)
Dyslexia Training for Professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting funds for in-school dyslexia training and dyslexia training in higher education programs. Example: CO SB 245 (2011). 2. Determine appropriate allocation of funds for dyslexia training 3. Develop training standards 4. Specify criteria for professionals working with students with dyslexia. Example: Texas Occupations Code Chapter 403
Eligibility for Accommodations and Services for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote awareness of dyslexia under IDEA- SLD or §504 or Rehabilitation Act 2. Develop district or school policy for eligibility of services and accommodations under IDEA or §504 for students with dyslexia. Example: CA Education Code Section 56333-56338
Classroom Instruction for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting instruction for students with dyslexia using research-based programs. Example: LA R.S. 17:7(11) 2. Provide a list of approved programs for implementation in the instruction of students with dyslexia. Example: Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook 3. Develop education programs for students with dyslexia. Example: Part XXXV. Regulations and Guidelines for Implementation of the Louisiana Law for the Education of Dyslexic Students
Interventions for Students with Dyslexia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft bill requesting interventions for students with signs of dyslexia. Example: NM HB 230 (2010) 2. Provide list of approved intervention programs to districts. Example: Intervention programs listed in dyslexia handbooks 3. Update list every five years

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Other resources:

- Academia page
 - <http://arizona.academia.edu/MarthaYouman/Papers>
- International Dyslexia Association
- Dyslexia Association in your state
- Dyslexia Handbooks and reports from taskforces

*Every child would read if it were in his
power to do so. (Betts, 1936)*

Questions?

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Thank You!