

Fact Sheet

Dyslexia

General Overview

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability which is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, poor spelling and decoding abilities. It is a syndrome of many varied reading and non-reading symptoms.

"The term dyslexia has been interchangeably used with many other terms like 'word blindness', 'specific developmental dyslexia', 'developmental dyslexia', 'strephosymbolia', 'reading disability', 'reading difficulty', 'primary reading retardation', 'learning disability', 'poor reading', 'inferior reading', 'inadequate reading'.

The symptomatology and populations described by the above terms are variable but they all share one main factor, the severe reading problems which cannot be explained by the same factors which cause reading backwardness".

*From: George Th. Pavlidis, *Dyslexia Research & its Application to Education*, Ed by G. Th. Pavlidis & T. R. Miles, 1981, 1985. Chapter 5, Sequencing, Eye Movements and the Early Objective Diagnosis of Dyslexia, Page 102, John Wiley & Sons.

EFFECTS ON DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS

Social and Emotional

- May feel unable to do the same things as other children
- Low self-esteem
- May have a delay in social skill development

Motor and Physical Development

- May have delays in gross or fine motor skill development eg. Development of
- Scissor skills or puzzles.

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Language and Communication Development

- Due to low self esteem may have delayed communication development

Cognitive Development

- May have learning difficulties
- May have difficulty in understanding verbal directions
- May have difficulty in classification and sequencing

Inclusion Strategies

Firstly it is important that, parents who may be concerned that their child has dyslexia, a diagnosis is made. Each child diagnosed with **Dyslexia** will be different and individual. It is important to gain information from the parents as to what characteristics of **Dyslexia** their child displays. It is important to work closely with the parents as well as any additional support specialists e.g. therapists who may be involved with the child. It is also important to gain an understanding from the parent as to what is the most important aspect of their child attending your service. What is it that parents hope to gain from using your service? The following inclusion strategies are just some examples which may be applied to support the inclusion process. This list is only the start and it is dependent on a variety of factors such as environment, length of time child is in care, child's interest, likes, dislikes, skills already achieved. The strategies are divided into developmental areas however some strategies overlap and assist in a variety of developmental areas. Encourage staff to ask parents about the strategies they use.

Social Development

- Use activities that require sharing, turn taking and small groups allowing the child to participate at own level.
- Value and acknowledge child's efforts.
- Provide activities that require two children to work together.

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Physical Development

- Plan gross motor and fine motor activities in areas of child's interests e.g. art, home corner
- Provide activities that requires some problem solving with the aim for the child to achieve. e.g. memory games, how many things are the same games.
- Provide finger plays to encourage the use of both hands in a controlled manner as well as developing fine motor skills
- Plan for fine motor developmental tasks with adaptive equipment such as a non slip mat under the drawing paper, thick crayons, thick handled paint brushes that are easy to grasp.

Language

- Utilise the use of large clear pictures to reinforce what you are saying
- Para-phrase back what the child has said
- Label areas in the room with words and pictures
- Use sequencing cards to support children's learning of how to predict what comes next and associate events.
- Provide puppets/pictures as an extra prop when using finger plays and songs
- Reduce the amount of instructions in one statement to allow time for the child to gain an understanding of what is been said e.g. "Hold the puppet up high" rather than "hold the puppet up high and wave it around so that all the children can see it." Once child understands to "hold the puppet up high" you can then add "Good, now all the children can see it"
- Ascertain from parents words that are familiar with the child e.g. family words that represent aspects of child life and use these in your program

Cognitive

- Encourage use of a bright easily recognisable bag for child to be able to recognise his hook/locker
- Plan experiences that are relevant to the child's world.
- Gain information from parents about child's likes, interests and dislike and incorporate these in your program.
- Break tasks down to smaller steps e.g. placing one puzzle piece in a time rather than expecting the puzzle to be completed

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- Allow the child time to complete tasks and practice skills at own pace.
- Acknowledge level of achievement e.g. "you have placed that piece in the puzzle, well done" rather than just "Good boy".

References

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