

Understanding Dyslexia:

A guide for parents.



What is Dyslexia?

According to the **International Dyslexia Association (IDA)**, **dyslexia** is:

“A specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.”

These difficulties often result from a deficit in the phonological component of language and are **unexpected** in relation to other cognitive abilities and effective classroom instruction.

Signs of Dyslexia (from the Oklahoma Dyslexia & Dysgraphia Handbook)

Early signs in preschool and early elementary may include:

- Delayed speech
- Trouble learning the alphabet, rhyming, or naming letters
- Difficulty recognizing and forming letters and sounds
- Struggles with spelling simple words (even after practice)

In older children and teens:

- Slow or inaccurate reading
- Avoidance of reading aloud
- Trouble with spelling and written expression
- Poor working memory (e.g., remembering multi-step directions)

How Parents Can Help

Get a Formal Evaluation

- Request a **dyslexia screening or evaluation** through your child's school.
- Schools in Oklahoma must provide screenings for students who show risk factors (see HB 2804 and the Dyslexia Handbook for parent rights).

Support Structured Literacy at Home

- Use **structured literacy strategies** based on the science of reading. These include:
 - Explicit phonics instruction
 - Practice with decoding and encoding (reading & spelling)
 - Multisensory learning (using sight, sound, touch, and movement)

Read Aloud and Discuss Books Together

- Let your child listen to audiobooks while following along in print.
- Read aloud daily—even if your child is older. Discuss vocabulary and key ideas.

Encourage and Empower

- Celebrate **effort**, not just outcomes.
- Help your child understand that dyslexia has **nothing to do with intelligence**—in fact, many people with dyslexia are highly creative and innovative thinkers.

Work With the School

- Ask if your child is receiving **evidence-based reading interventions**.
- Stay involved with the **IEP** or **504 Plan** process.
- Ask for accommodations like:
 - Extra time on tests
 - Audiobooks or text-to-speech tools
 - Reduced spelling demands

Oklahoma Resources for Families

Oklahoma Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Handbook

Offers detailed guidance on the evaluation and support process in Oklahoma schools. [Available on the OSDE website.]

Decoding Dyslexia Oklahoma

A parent-led group offering support, information, and advocacy.

The Reading League Oklahoma

Promotes the science of reading and structured literacy practices.

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

Visit <https://dyslexiaida.org> for toolkits, webinars, and downloadable guides.