Warning Signs of Dyslexia

If a child has 3 or more of the following warning signs, encourage that child’s parents and teachers to learn more about dyslexia.

In Preschool

• delayed speech
• mixing up the sounds and syllables in long words
• chronic ear infections
• severe reactions to childhood illnesses
• constant confusion of left versus right
• late establishing a dominant hand
• difficulty learning to tie shoes
• trouble memorizing their address, phone number, or the alphabet
• can’t create words that rhyme
• a close relative with dyslexia

In Elementary School

• dysgraphia (slow, non-automatic handwriting that is difficult to read)
• letter or number reversals continuing past the end of first grade
• extreme difficulty learning cursive
• slow, choppy, inaccurate reading:
  - guesses based on shape or context
  - skips or misreads prepositions (at, to, of)
  - ignores suffixes
  - can’t sound out unknown words
• terrible spelling
• often can’t remember sight words (they, were, does) or homonyms (their, they’re, and there)
• difficulty telling time with a clock with hands
• trouble with math
  - memorizing multiplication tables
  - memorizing a sequence of steps
  - directionality
• when speaking, difficulty finding the correct word
  - lots of “whatyamacallits” and “thingies”
  - common sayings come out slightly twisted
• extremely messy bedroom, backpack, and desk
• dreads going to school
  - complains of stomach aches or headaches
  - may have nightmares about school

In High School

All of the above symptoms plus:

• limited vocabulary
• extremely poor written expression
  - large discrepancy between verbal skills and written compositions
• unable to master a foreign language
• difficulty reading printed music
• poor grades in many classes
• may drop out of high school

In Adults

Education history similar to above, plus:

• slow reader
• may have to read a page 2 or 3 times to understand it
• terrible speller
• difficulty putting thoughts onto paper
  - dreads writing memos or letters
• still has difficulty with right versus left
• often gets lost, even in a familiar city
• sometimes confuses b and d, especially when tired or sick

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