Dyslexia and Special Education Process: District Perspectives
Definition

Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

- International Dyslexia Association
Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. Dyslexia is the most common learning disability - 80% of all learning disabilities are characterized by difficulties in accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. The phonological deficit causes weak decoding skills leading to labored reading and secondary difficulties with spelling and writing. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.
DESE says…

- While federal regulations include dyslexia in the definition of a specific learning disability, Missouri state guidelines do not recognize the term dyslexia as an education disability category.

- Students must still meet DESE criteria for a Specific Learning Disability as outlined in the Standards and Indicators (i.e., a discrepancy between cognitive ability and academic achievement).

- [http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/1400-ELIGIBILITY%20CRITERIA-Specific%20Learning%20Disabilities_0.pdf](http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/1400-ELIGIBILITY%20CRITERIA-Specific%20Learning%20Disabilities_0.pdf)
Decodable,
Specific deficit in their ability to manipulate and connect sounds to symbols. You could have trouble in reading for other reasons but this is how dyslexia might impact it.
1. Boys with dyslexia are more frequently identified in schools. Why the difference? Researchers found that girls tend to quietly muddle through challenges while boys become more rambunctious. Boys’ behavioral difficulties draw the teacher’s attention to them.

2. Symptoms sometimes include flipping letters around, but this is not always a sign. (young children who do not have dyslexia often do this too) It is not the only problem associated with dyslexia. People with dyslexia may have trouble with a number of skills, including writing, spelling, speaking and socializing. Dyslexia is not a visual problem, it is not a problem seeing written words, but in understanding written words. Word reversals and skipping words and lines are due to linguistic deficiencies and not visual or perceptual disorders.
4. Having dyslexia certainly doesn’t mean the child isn’t smart. With the right kind of support, many children with dyslexia go on to higher education and to have very successful careers.

5. Dyslexia is a lifelong challenge, children do not grow out of dyslexia, they simply become adults with dyslexia. But early intervention and helpful classroom accommodations can have a significant, positive impact on reading ability and academic achievement.
Myths Continued

Myth #4: Wilson Reading Program is the only way to address dyslexia. Wilson must be referenced on the IEP

Addressing students with reading concerns is indeed challenging. There are several programs available which are comprehensive in nature and research based. Wilson is one of these programs. Determining the most appropriate reading program is an instructional decision. Not the IEP Team.
IEP Guidance

- IEP Team should be aware that parents of children with dyslexia may have had previous experiences that were contentious and may have been coached to expect the IEP Team to be resistant

- IEP Team should be open to learn from parent and consider information presented as a part of the IEP process

- SSD endorses the inclusion of information regarding the presence of a medical diagnosis of Dyslexia documented in the PLAAFP

- If further guidance is needed please contact your Area Coordinator
How would dyslexia be denoted in the IEP?
The evaluation process - does our current evaluation process allow us to drill down to specific key deficits in reading to allow teachers to differentiate their treatment plan?
Training - AC’s, School Psychs, SLP’s, Gen Ed partners?-critical people, SPED teachers
Clarify the role of the SLP in teaching reading
Decisions about programs vs. strategy-based training - cost, sustainability
It is important to recognize that the example on this slide represents one possibility to appropriately refer to dyslexia within the IEP. There are many other ways to describe the impact of a learning disorder such as dyslexia within the IEP. Key guidance is for the team to describe the specific patterns of strengths and weaknesses in order to assist the educational team in planning for effective instruction.
Future Trainings

- Trainings for improving understandings and support for students who have been identified with Dyslexia are underway. Please consult your region supports (Supervisor, Administrative Supports) for details.