

Dyslexia Handbook

2025-2026



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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Wellman-Union Dyslexia and Related Disorders Program Guide is to provide procedures for campuses, teachers, students, and parents/guardians in early identification of, instruction for, and accommodations for students with Dyslexia and related disorders. The Wellman-Union Dyslexia and Related Disorders Program Guide reflects current law as well as legislative action from the 88th session of the Texas Legislature, House Bill (HB) 3928 and 19 TAC 74.28 and replaces all previous handbook editions.

The Dyslexia and Related Services Program Guide provides procedures regarding Dyslexia and related disorders in Wellman-Union. The guide also provides general information about Dyslexia and Dysgraphia, and procedures to follow when school staff or parents suspect a student may present with Dyslexia or a related disorder.

Specific information is provided in regard to student monitoring, allowable accommodations, as well as criteria to exit the program.

Dyslexia and Related Disorders Program Goal

The Dyslexia and related disorders program is designed to offer research-based targeted instruction to students who are identified with Dyslexia or a related disorder and the difficulties that may arise in relation to reading, writing, and spelling.

Definitions

TEC §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way:

“Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

“Related disorders” include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

TEC §38.003(d)(1)-(2) (1995)

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.38.htm#38.003>

The International Dyslexia Association defines “dyslexia” in the following way:

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 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.

Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association Board of Directors,
November 12, 2002

Characteristics and Consequences of Dyslexia

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Students identified as having dyslexia typically experience primary difficulties in phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word reading, reading fluency, and spelling.

Consequences may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties in phonological awareness are unexpected for the student's age and educational level and are not primarily the result of language difference factors. Additionally, there is often a family history of similar difficulties.

It is important to note that individuals demonstrate differences in degree of impairment and may not exhibit all the characteristics listed below.

Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia are Difficulties With:

- Reading words in isolation
- Accurately decoding unfamiliar words
- Oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Spelling

Reading/Spelling Characteristics Most Often Associated With:

- Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
- Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

Consequences of Dyslexia may Include:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

Common Risk Factors Associated with Dyslexia

- **Preschool**
 - Delay in learning to talk
 - Difficulty with rhyming
 - Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., "pusgetti" for spaghetti, "mawn lower", for "lawn mower")
 - Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
 - Difficulty adding new vocabulary words
 - Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
 - Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/her name
 - Aversion to print (e.g., doesn't enjoy following along if a book is read aloud)
- **Kindergarten and First Grade**

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

 - Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts, or syllables (e.g., "baseball" can be pulled apart into "base" "ball" or "napkin" can be pulled apart into "nap" "kin")
 - Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., "man" sounded out as /m/ /ă/ /n/)
 - Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
 - Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
 - Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., "sed" for "said")
- **Second and Third Grade**

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Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., “to,” “said,” “been”)
- Difficulty decoding single words • Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., “after” spelled “eftr”)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expression

- Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., “big” instead of “enormous”)
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

- Middle School and High School

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

- Postsecondary

Some students will not be identified as having dyslexia prior to entering college. The early years of reading difficulties evolve into slow, labored reading fluency. Many students will experience extreme frustration and fatigue due to the increasing demands of reading as the result of dyslexia. In making a diagnosis for dyslexia, a student’s reading history, familial/genetic predisposition, and assessment history are critical. Many of the previously described behaviors may remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty pronouncing names of people and places or parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places
- Difficulty with word retrieval
- Difficulty with spoken vocabulary
- Difficulty completing the reading demands for multiple course requirements
- Difficulty with notetaking
- Difficulty with written production
- Difficulty remembering sequences (e.g., mathematical and/or scientific formulas)

State and Federal Requirements

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Evidence-Based Core Reading Instruction

TEC §28.0062 requires each local education agency (LEA) to provide for the use of a phonics curriculum that uses systematic direct instruction, without the incorporation of three-cueing, in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain necessary early literacy skills. LEAs must ensure that all kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers attend a teacher literacy achievement academy to increase teacher knowledge and implementation of the science of teaching reading. Additionally, LEAs must certify to the agency that they prioritize placement of highly effective teachers in kindergarten through second grade and have integrated reading instruments used to diagnose reading development and comprehension to support each student in prekindergarten through third grade. Schools must ensure that all students receive explicit systematic Tier 1 reading instruction.

Screening and Reading Diagnostics

In 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature passed HB 1886, amending TEC §38.003, Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia to require that all kindergarten and first-grade public school students be screened for dyslexia and related disorders. Additionally, the law requires that all students beyond first grade be screened or tested as appropriate.

A related state law adds an additional layer to screening requirements for public school students. TEC §28.006, Reading Diagnosis, requires each school district to administer to students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade a reading instrument to diagnose student reading development and comprehension. This law also requires school districts to administer a reading instrument at the beginning of seventh grade to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the sixth-grade state reading assessment. The law requires each school district to administer to kindergarten students a reading instrument adopted by the commissioner or an alternative reading instrument approved by the commissioner.

Further, a school district is required to notify the parent or guardian of each student in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade who is determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the results of the reading instruments. In accordance with TEC §28.006(g), an accelerated reading instruction program must be provided to these students.

Wellman-Union uses Amplify for Tier 1 reading curriculum. Wellman-Union uses Saxon Phonics for our Tier 1 phonics instruction. Wellman-Union will work to ensure teachers in grades K-3 have completed the Literacy Achievement Academies. The administrators will work to prioritize highly effective teachers in grades K-2 by ensuring these teachers have completed literacy achievement academies, received training on phonics and reading curriculum, receive training on screening and assessment tools, receive training on data analysis and instructional and intervention strategies.

Wellman-Union will screen all Kindergarten and First grade students. A Reading Diagnostic will be administered to all Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade students as well as the beginning of Seventh Grade to anyone who didn't demonstrate proficiency on the sixth-grade state reading assessment. WU will use CLI in Pre-Kindergarten, TX-KEA in Kindergarten, TPRI in First Grade, and TMSFA in Seventh Grade. WU will notify parents of screening and reading diagnostic results. Students determined to be at-risk will be placed on an accelerated learning pathway as well as closely monitored.

The district will screen at required intervals in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade in reading and math three times per year. All of the assessment instruments used for reading screening are nationally normed, supported by evidence of validity and reliability, and assessed using multiple domains of reading. It is important that screening instruments be

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accurate and comprehensive; however, the instruments need not be as comprehensive as an extensive individualized evaluation.

In developing the criteria for the screening instruments for Dyslexia and related disorders, it was important to differentiate between the skills and behaviors appropriate at each grade level. Additionally, with a sizable Emergent Bilingual population in Texas, it is essential that Spanish language screening instruments be addressed. Therefore, criteria for both English and Spanish are included

Criteria for English and Spanish Screening Instruments	
Kindergarten	First Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Naming Fluency • Phonological Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word Reading Accuracy or Fluency • Phonological Awareness

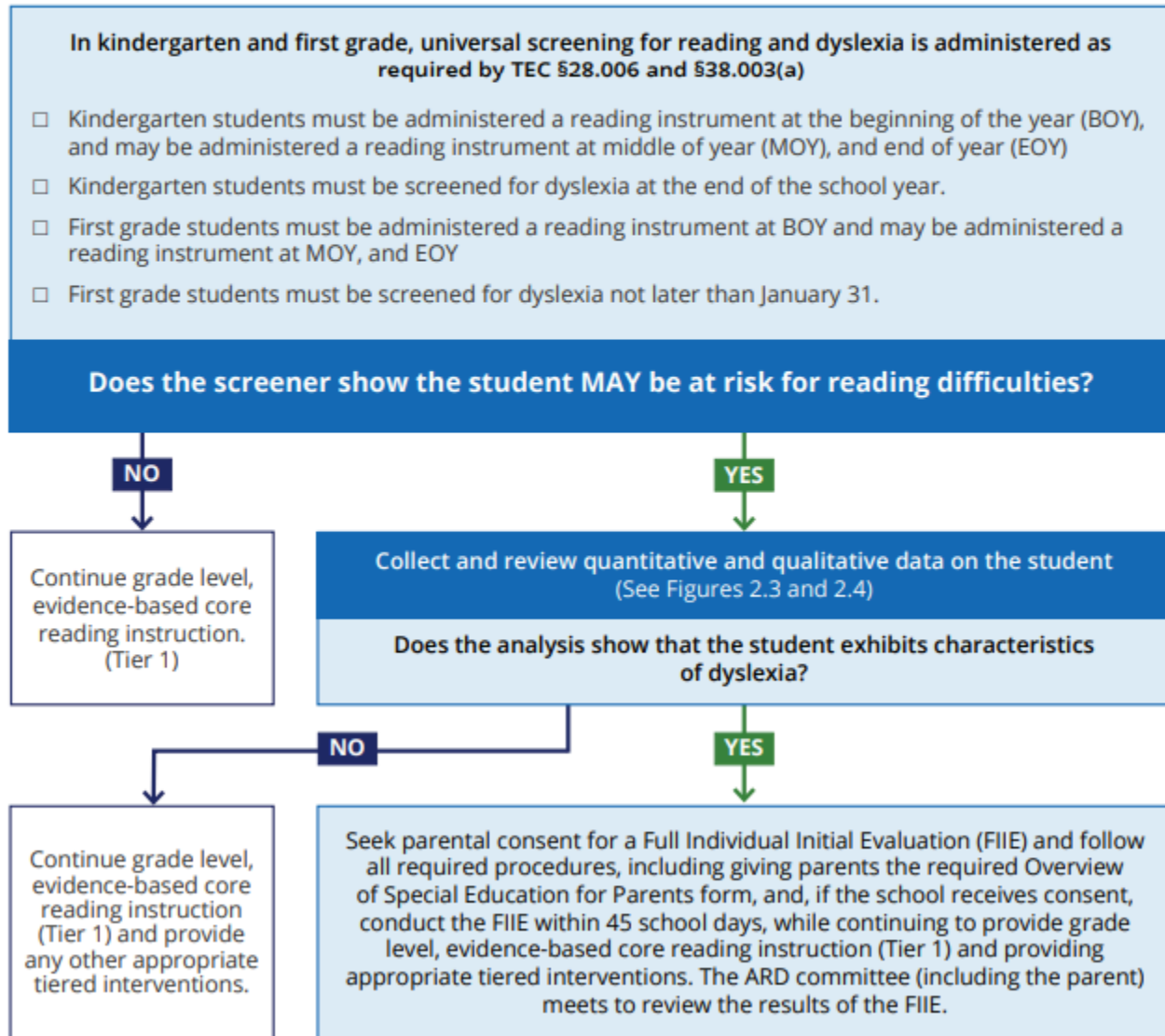
Student Behaviors Observed During Screening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of automaticity • Difficulty sounding out words left to right • Guessing • Self-correcting • Inability to focus on reading • Avoidance behavior

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Figure 2.5 Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk

Universal Screening and Data Review for Reading Risk



Source: The Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2024

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Interpretation of Data

A qualified team is required to review all data to make informed decisions regarding whether a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia. This team must consist of individuals who have knowledge of the student, are appropriately trained in the administration of the screening tool, are trained to interpret the quantitative and qualitative results from the screening process, and can recognize characteristics of dyslexia. The team may consist of the student's classroom teacher, provider of dyslexia instruction, reading interventionist, the individual who administered the screener, a special education teacher, a representative of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) (as appropriate), and an administrator.

It is important to remember that at any point in the data review process a referral for a FIE under the IDEA may be initiated. Parents also have the right to request a FIE at any time. Regardless of the process in place for screening and data review, whenever accumulated data indicate that a student continues to struggle with one or more of the components of reading, despite the provision of adequate instruction and intervention, the student must be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation under the IDEA.

Procedures for Evaluation and Identification

In Wellman-Union, students may be referred for a Dyslexia or related disorder evaluation at any time during the year. The following illustrates a process for determining the instructional support needed by students with dyslexia. While the process may begin with an initial screening, screening is NOT required to proceed through the evaluation and identification process.

The evaluation process and identification process can be multifaceted. In addition to state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for Dyslexia and related disorders, there are also overreaching federal laws and regulations to identify a student with disabilities, commonly referred to as Child Find.

- Child Find—a provision of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that requires states to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that every student in the state who needs special education and related services is located, identified, and evaluated. The purpose of IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities are offered a Free and Appropriate Public Education (20 U.S.C §1400 (d); 34 C.F.R §300.1). Since a student suspected of having Dyslexia or related disorders may be a student with a disability under IDEA, the Child Find mandate includes these students. Therefore, when referring and evaluating student suspected of having Dyslexia or related disorders, local education agencies must follow procedures for conducting a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIE) under IDEA.

The evaluation and process for students suspected of having Dyslexia or related disorders is guided by the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The student should continue to receive core instruction and appropriate tiered interventions while the process is being completed.

Multi-Tiered System of Support Team (MTSS)

Any parent/guardians, teachers, or other staff member may refer a student for considerations of dyslexia at any time during the school year. This consideration process involves gathering relevant and historic data to present to the campus Multi-Tiered System of Support Team (MTSS). This committee is a multidisciplinary team of school professionals who meet on a regular basis to address teachers' concerns about struggling students and help to design an intervention plan. It is important to note that progression through MTSS is not required to begin identification of dyslexia. Source: The Texas Dyslexia Handbook

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The purpose of the team is to be an effective problem-solving group that:

- Assesses teachers concerns about student academic and/or behavioral, and social and emotional needs
- identifies student strengths, interest and talents,
- reviews baseline data that has been collected,
- sets projected outcomes and methods for measuring progress,
- designs specific intervention plans,
- reviews and monitors intervention plans,
- develops a plan to communicate plans/results with students' parents/guardians.

When the Data Does Not Lead to Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder

If the team determines that the data does not give members reason to suspect that a student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or other disability, the team may decide to provide the student with additional support in the classroom or through the MTSS process. The student will continue to receive grade level, evidence-based core reading instruction. (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions. However, the student is not referred for an evaluation at this time.

When the Data Leads to Suspicion of Dyslexia or a Related Disorder

If the team suspects that the student has dyslexia, a related disorder, or another disability included within the IDEA, the team must refer the student for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIIE).

Parent Request for Evaluation

Parents/guardians always have the right to request a referral for a dyslexia evaluation at any time. This request should be made in writing to the campus principal. Once a parent request for dyslexia evaluation has been made, Wellman-Union will review the student's data history (both formal and informal data) to determine whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability. The district has 15 school days to respond to the request.

If a disability is suspected, the student will be evaluated for Dyslexia or other learning disabilities through a Full And Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIIE). Under IDEA, schools must give parents prior written notice of a refusal to evaluate, including an explanation of why the school refuses to conduct an initial evaluation, the information that was used as the basis for the decision, and a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

Notification and Consent for Evaluation

The individual needs of the student will determine the appropriate evaluation/identification process to utilize. The notices and requests for consents will be provided to parents/guardians.

Procedures of Evaluation

Data Gathering

When evaluating a student for Dyslexia or related disorders, the collection of various data will provide information regarding factors that may be contributing to or primary to the student's struggles.

Information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. This information should include data that demonstrates the student was provided appropriate instruction and data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals (progress monitoring), reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction. Additional information to be considered includes some or all of the following.

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Sources and Examples of Cumulative Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and hearing screening • Teacher reports of classroom concerns • Accommodations or interventions provided • Academic progress reports (report cards) • Gifted/talented assessment (if applicable) • Samples of schoolwork • Parent information • Results of universal screening (TEC §38.003) • Observations of instruction provided to student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous evaluations • Outside evaluations • Speech and language assessment • School attendance • Curriculum-based assessment measures • Instructional strategies provided and student's response to the instruction • Screening data
Data will be collected that supports the student has received conventional (appropriate) instruction and that the difficulties are not primarily the result of sociocultural factors which include language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.	
Dyslexia-Specific Data	Dysgraphia-Specific Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom reading assignments • 7th grade reading instrument results (TEC §28.006) • K-2nd reading instrument results (TEC §28.006) in English and native language, if possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom handwriting assessments • Classroom spelling assessments

Formal Evaluation

After data gathering, the next step in the process is formal evaluation. This is not a screening; rather, it is an individualized evaluation used to gather evaluation data. Formal evaluation includes both formal and informal data. All data will be used to determine whether the student demonstrates a pattern of evidence for Dyslexia or a Related Disorder.

In compliance with IDEA, test instruments and other evaluation materials must meet the following criteria

Criteria for Test Instruments and Evaluation Materials	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be validated for the specific purpose for which the tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials are used • Include material(s) tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely material(s) that are designed to provide a single, general intelligence quotient • Selected and administered to ensure that when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude, achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. • Selected and administered in a manner that is not racially or culturally discriminatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, district universal screenings, progress monitoring data, criterion-referenced evaluations, results of informal reading inventories, classroom observations) • Administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials • Provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information regarding what the child can do academically, developmentally, and functionally unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer.

Areas to Assess

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Wellman-Union administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Depending on the student's age and stage of reading development, the following are the areas related to reading that should be assessed.

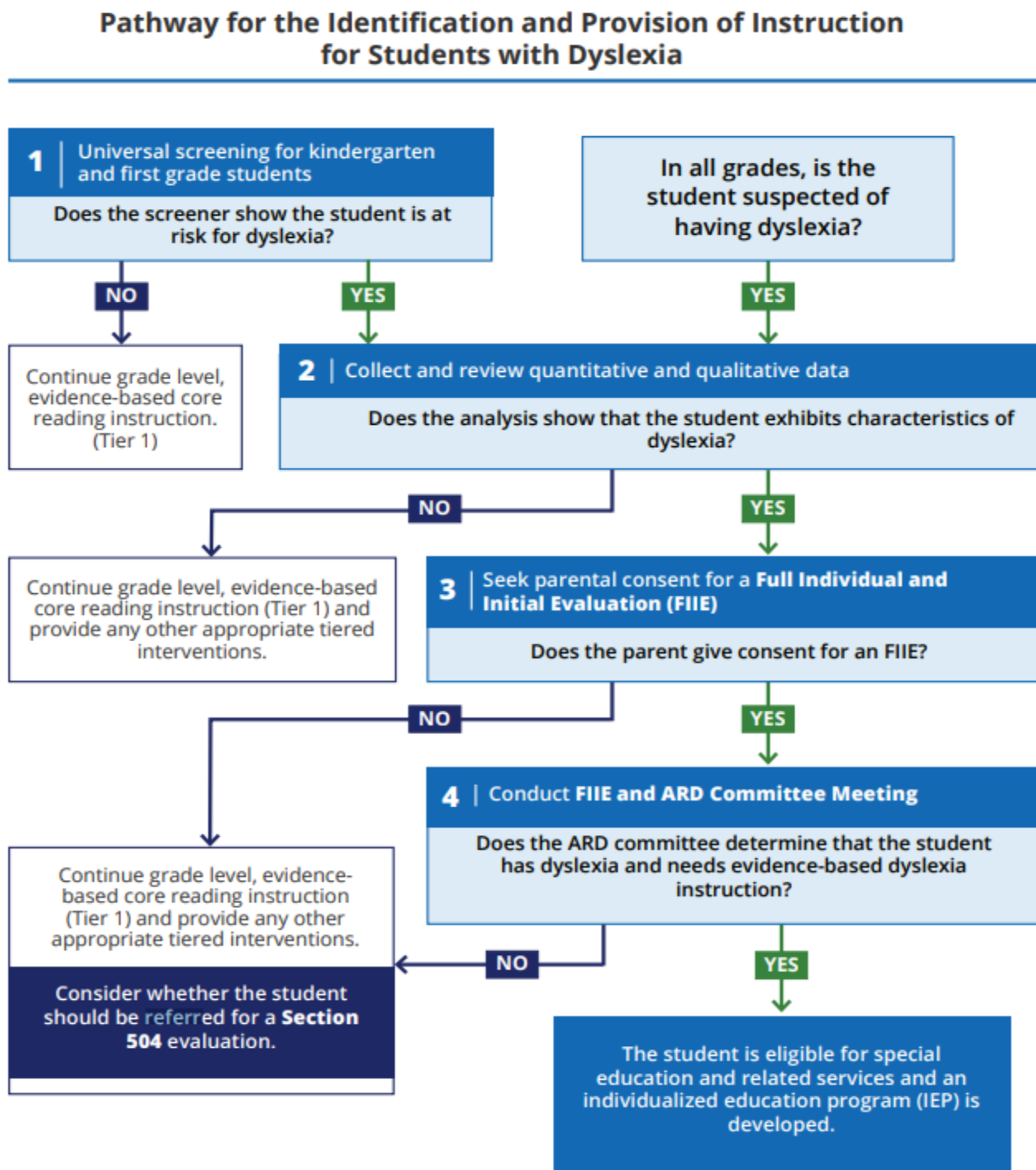
Areas for Evaluation of Dyslexia		
Academic Skills	Cognitive Processes	Possible Additional Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Knowledge (name and associated sound) • Reading words in isolation • Decoding unfamiliar words accurately • Reading fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody) • Reading comprehension • Spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological/phonemic awareness • Rapid naming of symbols or objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Listening comprehension • Verbal expression • Written expression • Handwriting • Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing) • Math calculation/reasoning • Phonological memory • Language proficiency

Areas for Evaluation of Dysgraphia		
Academic Skills	Cognitive Processes	Possible Additional Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter formation • Handwriting word/sentence dictation (timed and untimed) • Copying of text • Written expression • Spelling • Written Fluency (both accuracy and fluency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological awareness • Phonological memory • Working memory • Letter retrieval • Letter matching

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Figure 3.8. Pathway for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia



Source: Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2024

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Assessment of Special Education Students

If a student is already in special education, but exhibits the characteristics of Dyslexia or related disorders and is referred for assessment, assessment procedures for students under the Individuals with Disabilities Act will be followed. Assessment data from prior special education assessments may be utilized, and/or additional assessment may be conducted to evaluate students for Dyslexia and related disorders. The ARD committee will make determinations for these students. If the student with Dyslexia or related disorder is found eligible for special education in the area of reading, and the ARD committee determines the student's instructional needs for reading are most appropriately met in a special education placement, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must include appropriate reading instruction. Appropriate reading instruction includes the components and delivery of Dyslexia and related disorders instruction.

Emergent Bilingual Students and Dyslexia

Dyslexia instruction for Emergent Bilinguals (EB) must incorporate the ELPS. A few strategies to consider include the following:

- Establish routines so that EBs understand what is expected of them.
- Provide native language support when giving directions or when students do not understand the task.
- Provide opportunities for repetition and rehearsal so that the new information can be learned to mastery.
- Adjust the rate of speech and the complexity of the language used according to the second language proficiency level of each student.
- Provide extra time for the EB to process the English language. This is especially necessary during the early stages of second language development.
- Provide extra time for the EB to formulate oral and written responses.
- Emphasize text that includes familiar content and explain the structure of the text.

Wellman-Union can assess Emergent Bilinguals for dyslexia. A student can be referred for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE). Diversity exists among Emergent Bilinguals (EBs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student's linguistic environment and educational background. Involvement of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in the decisions making process is required.

Data to be gathered when assessing the Emergent Bilinguals:

- Home language survey
- Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency
State student assessment data results when available
- TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System) Assessment results when available
- Type of language programming provided and language of instruction
- Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development
- Previous school experience in and outside of the United States

Interpretation:

- Results of Emergent Bilinguals (EB) will be interpreted in light of the student's: language development (in both English and the student's native language), educational history, linguistic background, socioeconomic issues, nature of the writing system and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

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Students Transferring with Dyslexia or Related Disorders Identification

If a student enrolls in the district from another district or school with an identification of dyslexia, the Campus 504 or ARD Committee will convene to review and continue existing services, to the extent possible, while additional data is collected to determine appropriate, individualized accommodations and services. All campus 504/ARD processes and procedures must be followed. Prior to the 504/ARD committee meeting, the campus will obtain and send original testing information to the campus Dyslexia Specialist for review. This may have to be requested from the previous school attended. The campus Dyslexia Specialist will review all documentation to determine if additional evaluation is needed to consider placement into the district Dyslexia Program. If additional assessment is required, the campus Dyslexia Specialist will notify the campus diagnostician so that consent for assessment can be obtained. The additional assessments will be administered upon receipt of consent for assessment from the parent/guardian. The existing data, along with the new assessment information, will be used by the Campus 504/ARD Committee to determine appropriate placement based upon student need. Services should be put in place until final determination is made if a student has transferred as a student with specific services.

Assessing Private School or Home School Students for Dyslexia or Related Disorders

If a parent of a home or private schooled student requests testing for Dyslexia or related disorders, South Plains Educational Cooperative referral procedures will also occur. The campus diagnostician will request the student's current academic record and attendance information. Additional information related to the student's early childhood development and health history will be obtained from the parent/guardian. The campus MTSS committee will meet to determine if an evaluation is warranted through Special Education. If an assessment is initiated, after the assessment is completed, the home campus ARD Committee will meet to determine eligibility and appropriate placement and services, based upon student needs. Services may be provided by Wellman-Union if the student enrolls in Wellman-Union. According to the Texas Dyslexia Handbook, school districts are required to test students in private or homeschool settings, but are not required to provide services unless the student enrolled in the local school district.

Outside Dyslexia or Related Disorders Evaluation Acceptance Process

If a parent brings to Wellman-Union outside testing that identifies a student as dyslexic, the Campus ARD Committee will convene to determine whether an educational identification of dyslexia is appropriate and what services, if any, are needed in order for the student to be successful. All Wellman-Union ARD processes and procedures must be followed. Prior to the ARD committee meeting, the campus Dyslexia Specialist and campus diagnostician will collaboratively review all documentation to determine if additional evaluation is needed to consider placement into the Wellman-Union Dyslexia Program. If additional assessment is required, the campus diagnostician will notify the parent so that consent for assessment can be obtained. The additional assessments will be administered upon receipt of consent for assessment from the parent/guardian. The existing data, along with the new assessment information, will be used by the ARD Committee to determine appropriate placement based upon student need.

Review and Interpretation of Data and Evaluations

The ARD committee must interpret test results in light of the student's educational history, linguistic background, environmental or socioeconomic factors, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning. When considering the condition of dyslexia, in addition to required ARD committee members, the committee should also include members who have specific knowledge regarding:

- the reading process,
- dyslexia and related disorders, and
- dyslexia instruction.

Nondiscrimination

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A collaborative determination must first be made regarding whether a student's difficulties in the areas of reading and spelling reflect a pattern of evidence for primary characteristics of dyslexia with unexpectedly low performance for the student's age and education level in some or all of the following areas:

- Reading words in isolation
- Decoding unfamiliar words accurately and automatically
- Reading fluency for connected text (rate and/or accuracy and/ or prosody)
- Spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

Another factor to consider when interpreting test results is the student's linguistic background. The nature of the writing system of a language impacts the reading process. Thus, the identification guideposts of dyslexia in languages other than English may differ. A transparent written language has a close letter/sound correspondence. Students with dyslexia who have or who are being taught to read and write a transparent language may be able to decode real and nonwords adequately but demonstrate serious difficulties in reading rate with concurrent deficiencies in phonological awareness and rapid automatized naming (RAN).

Collaboration with Campus Dyslexia Service Provider

Evaluation determinations regarding Dyslexia or Related Disorders will be made by a team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation information, and instructional components and delivery instruction for students with Dyslexia. This team includes the campus Dyslexia service provider.

Procedures for Identification of Dyslexia

The list of questions, included within the Texas Dyslexia Handbook, must be considered when making a determination regarding Dyslexia.

1. Do the data show the following characteristics of Dyslexia?
 - Difficulty with accurate and/or fluent word reading
 - Poor spelling skills
 - Poor decoding ability
2. Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in the phonological component of language?
3. Are these difficulties **unexpected** for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction.

**** Evaluation personnel should be mindful that average phonological scores alone do not rule out dyslexia)**

The presence of a disability condition alone is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Eligibility under IDEA consists of meeting both of the following requirements.

1. Identification of the condition
2. Corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability.

Procedures for Identification of Dysgraphia

If the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, the ARD committee must then determine if the student has dysgraphia. The following list of questions obtained from the Texas Dyslexia Handbook must be considered when making a determination regarding dysgraphia.

1. Do the data show the following characteristics and consequences of dysgraphia?
 - Illegible and/or inefficient handwriting with variably shaped and poorly formed letters
 - Difficulty with unedited written spelling

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- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression
2. Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms)?
 3. Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction?

The presence of a disability condition alone is not sufficient to determine if the student is a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Eligibility under IDEA consists of meeting both of the following requirements.

1. Identification of the condition
2. Corresponding need for specially designed instruction as a result of the disability

Admission, Review, and Dismissal Meeting

Once the Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIIE) has been completed, an Admission, Review, and Dismissal meeting will occur to review the evaluation and determine the next appropriate steps for the student. Participants in the ARD meeting are called the ARD Committee and typically include, but is not limited to:

- Parent/guardian
- Campus administrator
- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- Dyslexia or Related Disorder service provider
- Diagnostician (assessment personnel)
- LPAC Representative (if applicable)
- Speech Language Pathologist (if applicable)

The ARD Committee will determine whether the student who has Dyslexia or a Related Disorder is eligible under IDEA as a student with a Specific Learning Disability. The October 23, 2015 letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services states that Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia are conditions that could qualify a child as a child with a Specific Learning Disability under IDEA.

Does Not Meet Eligibility Criteria for Dyslexia or a Related Disorder If the student does not meet eligibility criteria for Dyslexia or a Related Disorder, the student will continue to receive grade level, evidence based core instruction (Tier 1) and any other appropriate tiered interventions provided by the campus.

Determined to Have Dyslexia or a Related Disorder and in Section 504 Eligible

A student who is found not eligible under the IDEA because the student is determined to not need dyslexia instruction (i.e., specially designed instruction), but who is identified with dyslexia through the FIIIE process should not be referred for a second evaluation under Section 504. Instead, the Section 504 committee will use the FIIIE and determine eligibility for Section 504 as necessary. For students eligible for Section 504, a Section 504 committee will develop the student's Section 504 Plan, which must include appropriate instructional accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. A student identified with dyslexia and who needs dyslexia instruction would not be served under Section 504, as this is a specially designed instruction.

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Determined to Have Dyslexia or a Related Disorder and is Special Education Eligible

If the evaluation and committee is identified with Dyslexia or a Related Disorder, and the ARD Committee determined that the student's difficulties are unexpected in relation to other abilities, and the student presents with a need for specially designed instruction under IDEA, the ARD Committee will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This plan will include specific goals related to the student's needs as well as the schedule of services and location of the Dyslexia or a Related Disorder interventions. The committee must also consider and document whether the student is eligible for and requires accommodations related to state assessments. These accommodations require corresponding accommodations to general classroom instruction and assessment to be implemented and documented.

Difference Between Section 504 Services and Special Education Services

The Understood Team (understood.org) created the following chart to help determine the difference between Special Education (IEPs) and Section 504 plans. The two services are similar in some ways but very different in others. This chart compares them side by side to help you understand the differences.

	Special Education (IEP)	Section 504
Basic description	A blueprint or plan for a child's special education experience at school.	A blueprint or plan for how the school will provide support and remove barriers for a student with a disability.
What it does	Provides individualized special education and related services to meet a child's unique needs. These services are provided at no cost to families.	Provides services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers. As with an IEP, a 504 plan is provided at no cost to families.
What law applies	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): This is a federal special education law for children with disabilities.	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: This is a federal civil rights law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities.
Who is eligible	To get an IEP, there are two requirements: A child has one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA. The law lists specific challenges, like learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, and others. And the disability must affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the general education curriculum. The child must need specialized instruction to make progress in school.	To get a 504 plan, there are two requirements: A child has any disability. Section 504 covers a wide range of different struggles in school. And the disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom. Section 504 has a broader definition of a disability than IDEA. (It says a disability must substantially limit one or more basic life activities. This can include learning, reading, communicating, and thinking.) That's why a child who doesn't qualify for an IEP might still be able to get a 504 plan.
Independent evaluations	Families can ask the school district to pay for an independent educational evaluation (IEE) by an outside expert. The district doesn't have to agree. Families can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves, but the district may not give it much weight.	Doesn't allow families to ask for an IEE. As with an IEP evaluation, families can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves.
Who creates it	There are strict legal requirements about who participates. With a few exceptions, the entire IEP	The rules about who's on the 504 team are less specific than they are for an IEP. A 504 plan is created by a team of people who are familiar

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	<p>team must be present for IEP meetings. The team must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child’s parent or caregiver • At least one of the child’s general education teachers • At least one special education teacher • A specialist who can interpret evaluation results • A district representative with authority over special education services 	<p>with the child and who understand the evaluation data and special services options. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child’s parent or caregiver • General and special education teachers • The school principal
What is included	<p>The IEP sets learning goals and describes the services the school will provide. It’s a written document. Here are some of the most important things the IEP must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child’s present levels of academic and functional performance — how the child is currently doing in school • Annual education goals for the child and how the school will track progress • The services the child will get — this may include special education, related, supplementary, and extended school year services • The timing of services — when they start, how often they occur, and how long they last • Any accommodations — changes to the child’s learning environment • Any modifications — changes to what the child is expected to learn or know • How the child will participate in standardized tests • How the child will be included in general education classes and school activities 	<p>There is no standard 504 plan. Unlike an IEP, a 504 plan doesn’t have to be a written document. A 504 plan generally includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific accommodations, supports, or services for the child • Names of who will provide each service • Name of the person responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented
Notice	<p>When the school wants to change a child’s services or placement, it has to tell families in writing before the change. This is called prior written notice. Notice is also required for any IEP meetings and evaluations. Families also have “stay put” rights to keep services in place while there’s a disagreement about the IEP.</p>	<p>The school must notify families about an evaluation or a “significant change” in placement. Notice doesn’t have to be in writing, but most schools do so anyway.</p>
Consent	<p>A parent or caregiver must consent in writing for the school to evaluate a child. They must also consent in writing before the school can provide the services in an IEP.</p>	<p>A parent or caregiver’s consent is required for the school district to evaluate a child.</p>
Review and revise frequency	<p>The IEP team must review the IEP at least once a year. The child must be reevaluated every three</p>	<p>The rules vary by state. Generally, a 504 plan is reviewed each year and a reevaluation is done every three years or when needed.</p>

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	years to determine whether services are still needed.	
Dispute resolution	<p>IDEA gives families several ways to resolve disputes (usually in this order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation • Due process complaint • Resolution session • Civil lawsuit • State complaint • Lawsuit 	<p>Section 504 gives families several options for resolving disagreements with the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation • Alternative dispute resolution • Impartial hearing • Complaint to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) • Lawsuit
Funding/costs	<p>Students receive these services at no charge. States receive additional funding for students with IEPs.</p>	<p>Students receive these services at no charge. States do not receive extra funding for students with 504 plans. But the federal government can take funding away from programs (including schools) that don't meet their legal duty to serve kids with disabilities. IDEA funds can't be used to serve students with 504 plans.</p>

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Services to be Provided

Wellman-Union provides Dyslexia or a Related Disorder services to address the state required components for instruction in the following areas:

Instruction for Dyslexia or a Related Disorder	
Dyslexia or a Related Disorder instruction incorporates explicit, systematic teaching in a multisensory approach that is cumulative and systematic, and teaches to automaticity.	
Dyslexia	Dysgraphia
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Phonemic Awareness—enables the student to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language. It is the insight that spoken words can be conceived as a sequence of sounds.● Graphophonemic Knowledge (Phonics)—takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds, and sounds are written with letters in the right order. Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing.● Language Structure—instruction that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language conveys meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context).● Linguistics—instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with patterns of language so that words and sentences are carriers of meaning.● Strategy-Oriented—instruction that enables students to use strategies for decoding (reading), encoding (spelling), word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Handwriting<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Language by hand—letter production○ Language by ear—listening to letter names when writing dictated letters○ Language by mouth—saying letter names○ Language by eye—viewing the letters to be copied or reviewing for accuracy the letters that are produced from memory(Berninger & Wolf, 2016)● Spelling—complex process of translating a phoneme (spoken sound) to the corresponding grapheme (orthographic representation) in order to generate written text to express an idea.● Writing—instruction of explicit strategies for composing, including planning, generating, reviewing/evaluating, and revising different genres including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive compositions (IDA, 2012)

The determination of specific service time, service provider, and location of services is individually determined by the ARD Committee. Many factors are considered when making the determination that are child-specific. A blanket set of service time should not be used for all students.

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Accommodations

Accommodations are changes to materials, actions, or techniques, including the use of technology, that enables students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in grade-level or course instruction. The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as teachers use various instructional strategies to meet the needs of each student. Decisions about which accommodations to use are very individualized and should be made for each student ARD or Section 504 Committee, as appropriate. Students can, and should, play a significant role in choosing and using accommodations. The following are accommodations that CAN be provided.

Dyslexia	Dysgraphia
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of notes (e.g., teacher or peer provided)• Note taking assistance• Additional time on class assignments and tests• Reduced or shortened assignments• Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions• Priority seating assignment• Oral reading of directions or written material• Word banks• Audiobooks• Text to Speech software• Speech to text software	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow more time for written tasks (including note taking, copying, and tests)• Reduce the length requirements of written assignments• Provide copies of notes or assign a note taking buddy to assist with filling in missing information• Allow recording of important assignments and/or take oral tests• Assist with developing logical steps to complete a writing assignment instead of all at once• Allow use of technology (e.g., speech to text software)• Allow the student to use cursive or manuscript, whichever is most legible and efficient• Use graph paper for math, or turn lined paper sideways, to help with lining up columns of numbers

Exiting from Dyslexia or a Related Disorder Services

Upon completion of the Dyslexia or a Related Disorder services includes many components and is determined as an ARD or Section 504 committee. Students receiving services will also follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements as outlined in federal law. The following is a non-comprehensive list of criteria to help the committee determine the need for dismissal from the program.

- Program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals
- Grades from progress reports and/or report cards
- State assessment data
- Benchmarks
- Progress monitoring data
- Teacher and/or parent observations/checklists
- Individual program requirements

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Frequently Asked Questions

(Information taken from the Texas State Dyslexia Handbook - FAQ updated 2021)

1. Does the student have to be in a certain grade level before dyslexia assessment can occur? No.
 - There is not a grade-level requirement for assessment to occur; students shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance; reading difficulties; poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction; teacher's input; and input from the parents/guardians.
2. Can students in kindergarten and first grade be assessed for dyslexia? Yes.
 - The identification of dyslexia in young students in kindergarten and first grade will often occur through the observation of parents/guardians and educators that, despite engaged participation in comprehensive reading instruction, a child with good thinking and language ability shows limited reading progress. Early reading instruments (TEC §28.006) in grades K–2 assess the emerging reading skills that are key components to the identification of dyslexia. These skills include phonological awareness, letter knowledge (graphophonemic knowledge), decoding, and word reading. These instruments serve as an important early screening for many reading difficulties, including dyslexia. When a child does not meet the basic standards of these early reading instruments, the pattern of difficulty may indicate risk factors for dyslexia. A child whose skills have not reached the normative standards of these instruments requires intensified reading instruction and possible consideration for assessment for dyslexia. With the decision to assess for dyslexia in a young child (K–1), it is important to note that current standardized test instruments available to school districts are not particularly sensitive to the skill variations for these students. The identification will require data gathering that is not limited to standardized instruments and includes information from these early reading instruments and classroom performance patterns.
3. Is there one test that can be used to determine that a student has dyslexia and a related disorder? No.
 - School districts and open-enrollment charter schools should use multiple data sources, including formal and informal measures (e.g., day-to-day anecdotal information) that are appropriate for determining whether a student has dyslexia and a related disorder. Reading assessments, as appropriate for the reading development of the student, should include the following:
 - o Academic Skills
 - Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
 - Reading words in isolation
 - Decoding unfamiliar words accurately
 - Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy are assessed)
 - Reading comprehension
 - Spelling
 - o Cognitive Processes
 - Phonological/phonemic awareness
 - Rapid naming of symbols or objects
 - Orthographic Processing
 - o Possible Additional Areas That MAY Be Assessed
 - Vocabulary
 - Listening comprehension
 - Verbal expression
 - Written expression
 - Handwriting
 - Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic processing)

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- Mathematical calculations/reasoning
- Phonological memory
- Verbal working memory
- Processing speed

4. Who administers a dyslexia assessment to students?

- The Dyslexia Handbook contains references related to who is qualified to assess for dyslexia.
 1. Nineteen TAC §74.28 indicates that assessment should only be done by individuals/professionals who are trained to assess students for dyslexia and related disorders.
- A school district or open-enrollment charter school can determine in its policies and procedures who will conduct the dyslexia assessment. Testing will be done by the Multidisciplinary Team, which includes the PDI; in other cases, it may be an educational diagnostician or a licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP).

5. When should further assessment through special education be considered?

- If a student exhibits evidence of severe difficulties with academic skills and a disability is suspected, further assessment should be considered.
- If, while in dyslexia intervention, the student is not making sufficient progress, further assessment should be considered.
- If a student is not enrolled in public school (i.e., private school or a homeschool setting) and a learning disability is suspected, further assessment should be considered under Child Find.

Note: Students who are enrolled in a private school, including a home school, are entitled under Child Find to be assessed for a suspected learning disability; however, they must be enrolled in a public school to receive dyslexia services (TEC §38.003).

6. Is there a specific process for the identification and provision of instruction for students with dyslexia?

- TEC §38.003(a) mandates the identification of dyslexia, and TAC §74.28(a) ensures that procedures for identifying a student with dyslexia or a related disorder and providing appropriate services to the student are implemented in the district.

Resources

Books

- All Kinds of Minds by Mel Levine, M.D.
- Basic Facts About Dyslexia & Other Reading Problems by Louisa Cook Moats, Karen E. Dakin
- Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print—A Summary by Marilyn Jager Adams
- Chhabra The Worst Speller in Jr. High by Caroline Janover, Rosemary Wellner
- The Difficult Child by Stanley Turecki, M.D., Leslie Tonner
- Dyslexia, Fluency, and the Brain by Maryanne Wolf
- Dyslexia: Theory and Practice of Instruction, Third Edition by Diana Brewster Clark, Joanna Kellog Uhry
- English Isn't Crazy! by Diana Handbury King
- Helping Children Overcome L.D. by Gerome Rosner
- Homework Without Tears: A Parent's Guide for Motivating Children to Do Homework and to Succeed in School by Lee Canter, Lee Hausner
- How Dyslexic Benny Became a Star: A Story of Hope for Dyslexic Children and Their Parents by Joe Griffith
- Informed Instruction for Reading Success: Foundations for Teacher Preparation by The International Dyslexia Association
- Josh: A Boy with Dyslexia by Caroline Janover

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- Keeping A Head in School: A Student's Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders by Mel Levine, M.D.
- Learning Outside the Lines: Two Ivy League Students with Learning Disabilities and ADHD Give You the Tools for Academic Success and Educational Revolution by Jonathan Mooney, David Cole
- The Many Faces of Dyslexia by Margaret Byrd Rawson
- The Misunderstood Child: Understanding and Coping with Your Child's Learning Disability by Larry B. Silver, M.D.
- Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 2nd Edition by Judith R. Birsh (Ed.)
- My Name is Brain Brian by Jeanne Betancourt
- Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at a Level by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.
- Parenting a Struggling Reader by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats
- Proust and the Squid, The Story and Science of the Reading Brain by Maryanne Wolf
- The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease
- Reading David: A Mother and Son's Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dyslexia by Lissa Weinstein, Ph.D.
- Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know & Ways to Help by Pricilla Vail
- The Source for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia by Regina Richards
- Speech to Print by Louisa C. Moat
- Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Make a Difference During the Early Years by Susan L. Hall, Louisa C. Moats
- The Tuned-in, Turned-on Book about Learning Problems by Marnell Hayes
- The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research by Peggy McCardle, Vinita
- "What's Wrong with Me?" Learning Disabilities at Home and School by Regina Cicci

Assistive Technology

- Technology Supports for Struggling Readers <http://www.region10.org/dyslexia/techplan/>

Related Links

- Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) <http://www.altaread.org>
- ACT Assessment <http://www.act.org/aap/>
- The College Board <http://www.collegeboard.com>
- Council of Educators of Students with Disabilities (CESD) <http://www.504IDEA.org>
- Education Service Center Dyslexia Contacts www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC/index.html
- The Florida Center for Reading Research <http://www.fcrr.org>
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA) <http://www.interdys.org>
- International Reading Association (IRA) <http://www.reading.org>
- LD Online <http://www.ldonline.com>
- Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) <http://www.ldanatl.org>
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) <http://www.nichd.nih.gov>
- The National Reading Panel <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>
- Texas Center for Learning Disabilities <http://www.texasldcenter.org>
- The Dyslexia Handbook (English) - State of Texas <http://www.tea.texas.gov/curriculum/dyslexia/>
- Texas Education Agency (TEA) <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>
- Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity <http://dyslexia.yale.edu/>

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