

What are the rights of a person with dyslexia?

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) define the rights of students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities. These individuals are legally entitled to special services to help them overcome and accommodate their learning problems. Such services include education programs designed to meet the needs of these students. The Acts also protect people with dyslexia against unfair and illegal discrimination.

Who to Contact?

Department of Instruction
(505) 527-6628

*Information provided by:
The International DYSLEXIA
Association*

Fact Sheet #62 — 05/00

*“promoting literacy through
research, education, and advocacy”*



**LAS CRUCES
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

DYSLEXIA

JUST THE FACTS...

*Information provided by :
The International DYSLEXIA Association*

What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties in other language skills such as spelling, writing, and speaking. Dyslexia is a life-long status, however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can make it very difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment.

What causes dyslexia?

The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear, but anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions. Moreover, people with dyslexia have been found to have problems with discriminating sounds within a word, a key factor in their reading difficulties. Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or a desire to learn; with appropriate teaching methods dyslexics can learn successfully.

What are the signs of dyslexia?

The problems displayed by individuals with dyslexia involve difficulties in acquiring and using language—reading and writing letters in the wrong order is just one manifestation of dyslexia and does not occur in all cases. Other problems experienced by dyslexics include:

- Learning to speak
- Organizing written and spoken language
- Learning letters and their sounds
- Memorizing number facts
- Spelling
- Reading
- Learning a foreign language
- Correctly doing math operations

***Not** all students who have difficulties with these skills have dyslexia. Formal testing is the only way to confirm a diagnosis of suspected dyslexia.*

How is dyslexia diagnosed?

A formal evaluation is needed to discover if a person has dyslexia. The evaluation assesses intellectual ability, information processing, psycho-linguistic processing, and academic skills. The evaluation is used to determine whether or not a student is reading at the expected level, and takes into account the individual's family background and overall school performance. The testing can be conducted by trained school specialists.

How is dyslexia treated?

Dyslexia is a life-long condition. With proper help people with dyslexia can learn to read and/or write. Early identification and treatment is the key to helping people with dyslexia achieve in school and in life. Most people with dyslexia need help from a teacher or therapist specially trained in using a multisensory, structured language approach. Many individuals with dyslexia need one on one help so they can move forward at their own pace. It is important that these individuals be taught by a method that involves several senses (hearing, seeing, touching) at the same time. For students with dyslexia, it is helpful if their teachers or therapist work closely with classroom teachers.

How widespread is dyslexia?

Current studies suggest that 15-20% of the population has a reading disability. Of that population, 85% have dyslexia. Dyslexia occurs in people of all backgrounds and intellectual levels. In addition, dyslexia runs in families; Parents with dyslexia are very likely to have children with dyslexia. Some people are identified with dyslexia early in their lives, but for others their dyslexia goes unidentified until they get older. People who are very bright can have dyslexia. They are often gifted in the areas that do not require strong language skills, such as art, computer science, design, drama, electronics, math, mechanics, music, physics, sales and sports.