

ESSENTIALS OF DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENT



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WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

- “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 the other cognitive abilities and the provision of classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”

(IDA, 2002)

- Core problem in dyslexia is phonologic: turning print into sound

IS DYSLEXIA A LEARNING DISABILITY?

- **“Specific Learning Disability”** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, **dyslexia**, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage” (*Federal Register*, 1977, p. 65083).

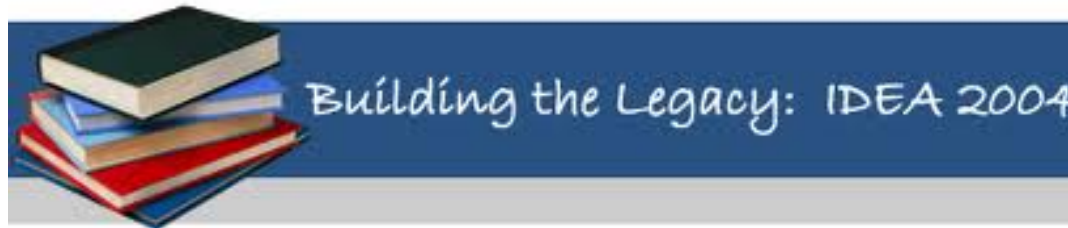
IDENTIFICATION VS DIAGNOSIS

- In general, a *diagnosis* is made by a medical professional.
- Schools and other school-related professionals *identify* students for special education in adherence with federal and state regulations governing special education. The child study and eligibility teams make the determination whether a student meets the criteria for requiring special education services under IDEA.
- If a student does not meet the criteria for special education services under IDEA but there is documentation of a disability or disorder, they may be entitled to a 504 plan.

Just because a student has been “diagnosed” with dyslexia does NOT mean that they will meet the criteria to be *identified* as requiring special education services under IDEA.

HOW DO STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

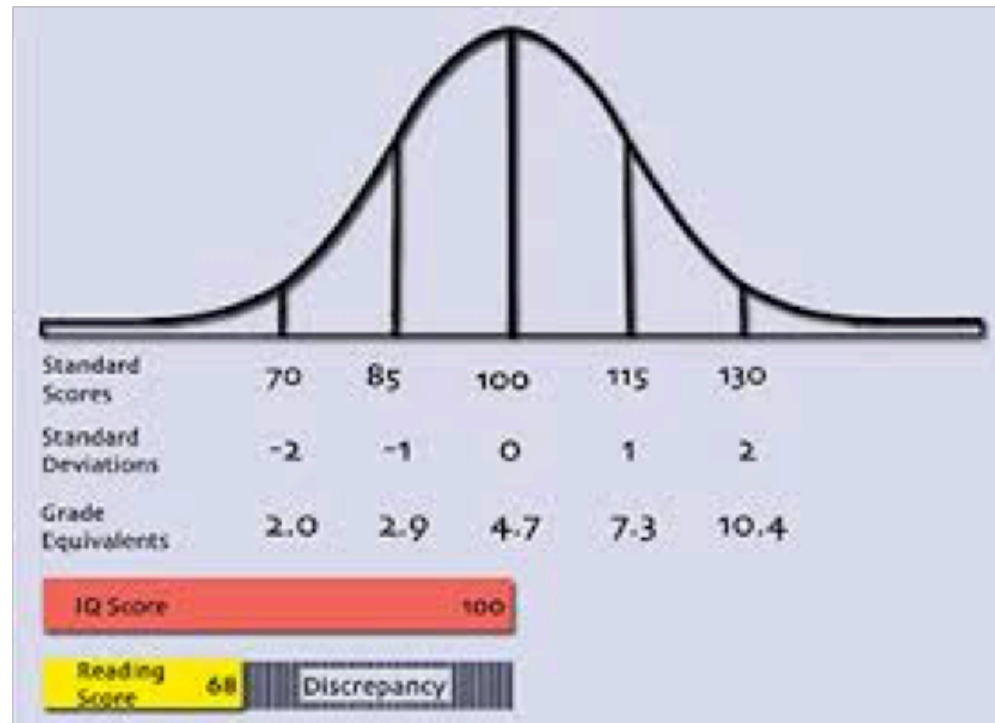
- Dyslexia falls under the disability category of Learning Disabilities under IDEA. Dyslexia is not recognized under IDEA as a distinct disability. Students with dyslexia **MUST** meet the criteria for one or more disabilities recognized under IDEA, and most often this is Learning Disabilities.



- Keep in mind: Identification for special education is a two-pronged criteria. There must be evidence of a disability **AND** the disability must significantly impact their educational performance/learning such that special education services are required for success.
- Students with dyslexia may also qualify for protections under Section 504 and be entitled to accommodations afforded by a 504 plan.

HOW DO WE ASSESS FOR A LEARNING DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA?

- The “old” model: *Wait to Fail* or the Ability-Achievement Discrepancy model
 - Compare ability (IQ) and achievement [in reading, math, written language, etc.] and demonstrate a “significant” discrepancy between the two.



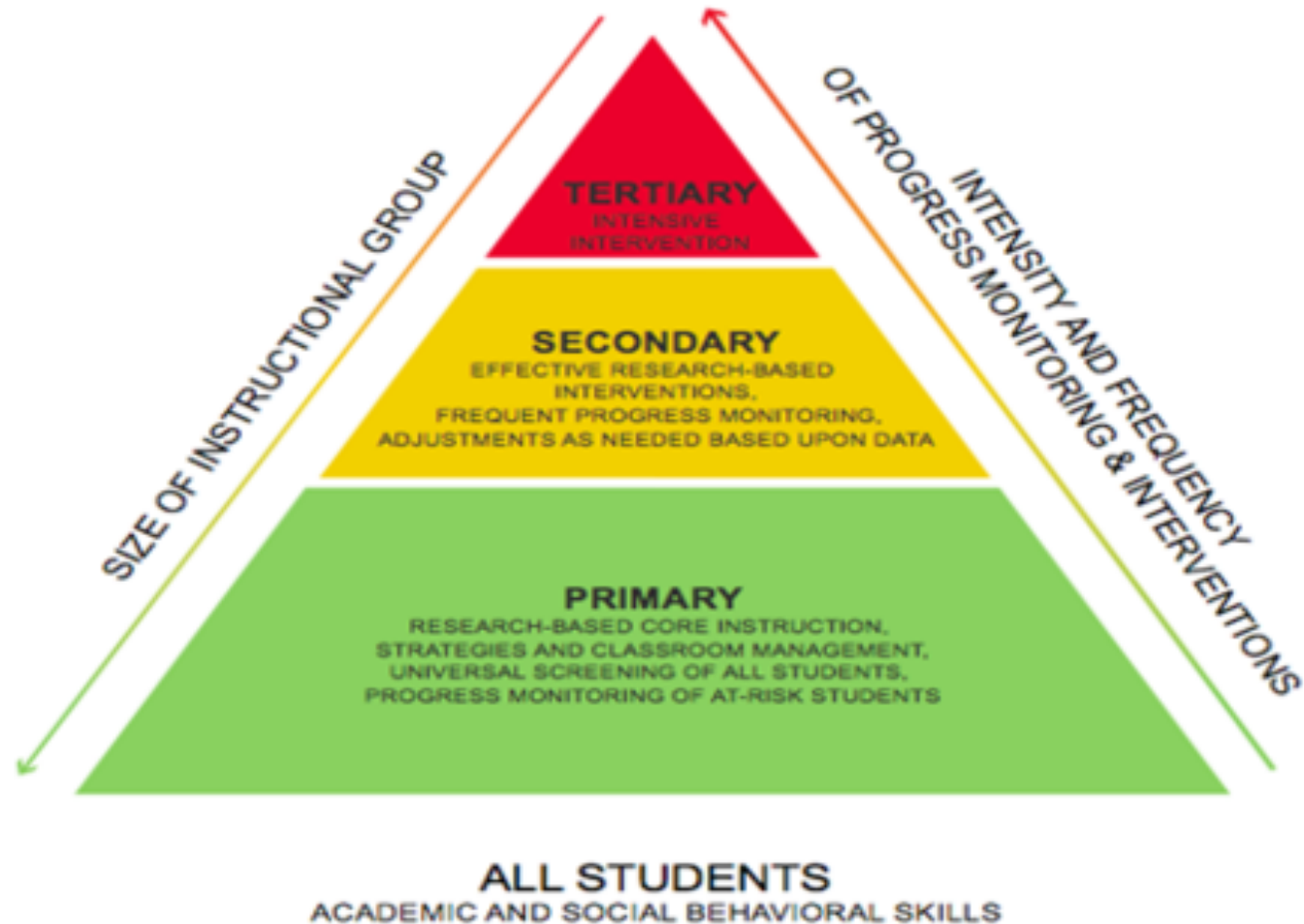
TURN AND TALK...

- What were/are some of the problems with this model?

PER IDEA 2004,

- A State must adopt, consistent with 34 CFR 300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10). In addition, the criteria adopted by the State:
 - Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10);
 - Must permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; and
 - May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10).
- A public agency must use the State criteria adopted pursuant to 34 CFR 300.307(a) in determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.
[34 CFR 300.307] [20 U.S.C. 1221e-3; 1401(30); 1414(b)(6)]

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION



“TYPICAL” EVALUATION FOR *LEARNING DISABILITIES*

- Measure of ability (IQ test such as the WISC)
- Measure of achievement (e.g.; Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test or WIAT OR KTEA)
- Observation
- Teacher and family report
- Developmental / medical history
- Additional diagnostic tests of areas of weaknesses demonstrated on the IQ and achievement tests (e.g.; CTOPP, Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Gray Oral Reading Test, Feifer Assessment of Reading, Test of Written Spelling, etc.)

INDICATORS OF DYSLEXIA

- Upon evaluation, indicators of dyslexia include...
 - Difficulty reading single words
 - Difficulty decoding nonsense or unfamiliar words
 - Reading comprehension is stronger than decoding individual words
 - Inaccurate and dysfluent oral reading
 - Difficulty reading small “function” words (that, is, an, etc.)
 - Slow reading
 - Poor spelling

Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level.*

TO ACCURATELY IDENTIFY DYSLEXIA, AN EVALUATION MUST INCLUDE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF....

- Phonological Awareness
- Rapid Automatic Naming (Letters, numbers, colors, objects)
- Alphabet knowledge (letter names, letter sounds)
- Single word decoding of real words and predictable nonsense words
- Reading Comprehension
- Oral Reading Fluency
- Encoding (Spelling)
- Oral language (Receptive, expressive)

And perhaps (as indicated/needed):

- Phonological Memory
- Written language (Syntax, conventions, punctuation, capitalization)
- Handwriting
- Writing Fluency

YOUR TURN!

- As a group, review & discuss the case study at your table.
- Knowing the requirements for special education identification for a learning disability, the necessary components of a comprehensive evaluation, and the assessment indicators/red flags for dyslexia, consider whether you believe your case study child...
 - Has had a comprehensive evaluation. If not, what is missing?
 - Would meet the criteria for a student with a learning disability AND requires special education services.
 - Has the profile of a student with dyslexia.
 - If you determine that the student would NOT qualify for special education services for a learning disability, do you think they might qualify under a different category? Which one and why?

LET'S TAKE A LOOK: KYLE, 1ST GRADE, MALE, 7-1

- Identified for speech-language in preschool, continues to receive now (2x/30 min), received ESY services for speech 2 summers
- Recommended for summer school after K, did not attend. Private reading tutor
- Performing below grade level in reading per teacher
- Daily 30-min intervention with reading specialist
- WISC-V
 - Verbal Comp= 84 (BA); Visual-Spatial = 111 (A); Fluid reasoning = 121 (AA); Working Memory = 76 (BA); Processing speed = 100 (A)
- KTEA-3
 - Reading Composite = 82; Math Composite = 82; Written Language = 84; Comp. = 87
 - Particular weaknesses noted in word recog fluency, math concepts & app, spelling
- Feifer Assessment of Reading
 - Phonological Index = 98 (Poor word reading fluency); Fluency Index = 79 (poor visual perception); Comprehension index = 84; FAR Total = 87 (Avg)

LET'S TAKE A LOOK: MISSY, 2ND GRADE, FEMALE, 7-7

- Concerns noted by school and family regarding progress in language arts, distractibility, and staying on task. Mother noted difficulties in preschool & K. Parents provide "tons" of outside support (mom an elem teacher). Motivated – wants to do well. HW takes forever. Has received private tutoring in reading, spelling, & written expression. PALS 1st grade testing – scored in the “just right” window. Did not receive any Tier 2 supports until end of 1st when went to Reading Recovery with reading specialist. Eventually received Tier 3 (One-on-one) support in reading from Literacy Support Specialist)
- WISC Score
 - FSIQ = 102 (Avg)
- WRAT-3 (Wide Range Achievement Test):
 - Reading SS= 99 (47th %ile); Spelling SS = 83 (13th %ile), & Math SS = 107 (68th %ile)
 - Spelling skills noted to be “quite weak”, considerable difficulty in reproducing letter sounds into written form. Tends to reverse “d” and “b”
- Expressive One Word Picture Vocab Test & Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF—4):
 - EOWPVT SS = 112 (79th %ile)
 - CELF-4: Expressive Language Index = 114, Language Content = 122, Language Structure = 106, Core Language Index = 117, Receptive Language Index = 115
- Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT)
 - Standard Score = 109 (73 %ile)
- Woodcock Johnson Achievement Test
 - Broad Reading = 102, Broad Math = 106, Broad Written Language = 115, Oral Language (Ext) = 122, Listening Comp= 123, Reading Comprehension = 91, Phon/Graph (word attack & spelling) = 98

LET'S TAKE A LOOK: KASEY, RISING 2ND GRADE, MALE, 7-9

- Performing below academic grade level during 1st grade
- Struggles with reading, writing, and math
- Student assistance plan (SAP) and daily literacy group – slow progress
- Difficulty attending to tasks & staying focused
- Impulsive, rushes through work
- Difficulty with fine motor which affects writing, letter formation & spacing
- Failed PALS 1st grade spring benchmark in reading and math
- Tutored 2x/week over the summer
- WJ Achievement Test:
 - Broad Reading SS = 86, Broad Written Language = 88, Broad Math = 96
- WISC Scores indicate Average IQ (FSIQ = 98)

LET'S TAKE A LOOK: GLORIA, 5TH GRADE, FEMALE, 10-10

- Attends private school
- Worked with a reading specialist in grades 1 & 2 for issues with decoding & reading comprehension
- Receiving Wilson Reading support (private)
- Grades all A's & B's (B- in English, Reading, Math; B+ in Science, B in SS; A in PE)
- Paternal family history of dyslexia
- When Gloria listens to books on tape, earns "A"
- WISC IV scores
 - Verbal Comp SS = 116; Perceptual Reasoning SS = 96, Working Memory SS= 83, Processing Speed SS= 115, FSIQ = 105 (Avg)
- ITPA – All scores fell in the Above Average to Average range except for Decoding (Significantly lower – Word ID & Spelling = Below Avg, Sound/Symbol subtest = Very Poor range)
- Woodcock Johnson Achievement Tests
 - Broad Reading = 96, Broad Math = 91, Broad Written Language = 104, Oral Language = 116
- Gray Oral Reading Test
 - Reading rate = 9 (Avg), Fluency = 8 (Avg), Comprehension = 11 (Avg)

TURN AND TALK...

- What does a “typical” evaluation in your school include?
- Would a “typical” evaluation in your school be sufficient to accurately identify dyslexia? Why or why not?
- Does it matter if we identify dyslexia versus a learning disability? Why or why not?

REFERENCES

- California Department of Education (2017). *California Dyslexia Guidelines*.
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- Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level*. Random House: New York.
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- Virginia Department of Education (2010). *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*.