

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY / DYSLEXIA

In November 2000, The New Mexico State Board of Education (SBE) established and published their *Literacy Policy*. In this policy, the State Department of Education (SDE) underscored early reading as “fundamental to learning and in demonstrating student achievement, instruction must focus on children’s learning to read and write in the early grades. In kindergarten through third grade, the learning activities and teaching practices must be developmentally appropriate, systematic, and explicit.”

Even with appropriate and high-quality reading instruction, some students continue to struggle. These students may need additional and/or alternative interventions to become successful readers. The SDE believes that these supports should be provided to struggling readers as part of a coordinated effort by schools and districts to meet the needs of **all** students.

The Special Education Office (SEO) at the SDE recognizes that even with additional supports, some students may continue to struggle with reading. Some of these students may be eligible for special education services. The SEO also recognizes that some of these students may have dyslexia and may benefit from quality and appropriate dyslexia-specific interventions.

In 2001, the SEO convened the New Mexico Dyslexia Task Force (NMDTF). The NMDTF was comprised of knowledgeable stakeholders’ was asked to provide more specific guidance to the SEO on how best to meet the needs of students with dyslexia. One of the NMDTF’s recommendations was to change state regulations to include a definition of dyslexia. Currently, the state special education regulations adopt the 13 federally recognized disability categories as provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at 34 CFR Sec. 300.7 (c) (10) (i). One of those categories is “specific learning disability.” Dyslexia is part of the definition of specific learning disability, and is described as follows:

The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculation, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

At present, the SDE anticipates that the U.S. Department of Education will develop a new definition, and/or provide guidance related to the identification of specific learning disability as part of the federal reauthorization of the IDEA that is currently underway. Once the IDEA is reauthorized, the SDE will review the definition and determine whether or not to address dyslexia more specifically through state regulations. In the interim, the SEO presents the NMDTF’s “working” definition of dyslexia in the hope that it may be useful to educators and parents in meeting the needs of students who struggle with reading and may have dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a specific language-based disorder often of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in the development of accurate and fluent single word decoding skills, usually associated with insufficient phonological processing and rapid naming abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in

relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling. Reading comprehension problems are common, reflecting word decoding, word identification, and reading fluency.

Effective interventions and/or instruction for students with dyslexia have been determined by the NMDTF to include the following components:

- Small class settings that include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate
- Phonemic awareness instruction
- Graphophonemic knowledge instruction
- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics
- Linguistics instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency
- Explicit attention to reading rate and fluency
- Instruction in the processes or strategies students use
- Systemic attempt to engage the student in reading and writing of text.

The Importance of Early Reading

In 2000 the National Reading Panel (NRP) issued a report that responded to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement. The panel reviewed more than 100,000 studies in reading instruction and identified methods that consistently relate to reading success. The findings of the NRP Report identified five areas of reading that are fundamental.

- Phonemic awareness – the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words
- Phonics – the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes and graphemes, the letters that represent those sounds in written language
- Fluency – the ability to read a text accurately and quickly, and is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension
- Vocabulary – the words we must know to communicate effectively, and provides the understanding required for reading comprehension.
- Text comprehension strategies – conscious plans or a set of steps that good readers use to make sense of text

WEB BIBLIOGRAPHY

In response to the NMDTF's recommendations and House Joint Memorial 9 (2001), and to build capacity and ensure that all of New Mexico's children and youth become successful readers, the SEO offers the following information and resources on instruction for students with dyslexia. The contents of the SDE's dyslexia web page and the following referenced sites are intended for informational use only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SDE. Information contained on these pages is intended to increase the understanding of specific learning disabilities, and in particular dyslexia. The SDE does not recommend or endorse specific products, programs, courses of action, and websites or their contents.

General Internet Information

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Web Site Only

<http://ericae.net/search.htm>

This is a site for information from a multitude of source on a variety of topics. It is relatively easy to navigate. This link will give you a search box at the bottom of the page in which you can enter any disability category to get more information. Printed articles can be ordered.

Associations

The British Dyslexia Association

98 London Road

READING

RG1 5AU

Phone: (0118) 966-2677 – Fax: 0118 935 1927

<http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk>

This site for parents, teachers, and schools has a variety of information.

Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities

Web Site Only

<http://www.aboutld.org>

This site provides links to seven of the major sites for information about dyslexia.

Davis Dyslexia Association International (DDAI)

1601 Bayshore Highway, Suite 245

Burlingame, CA 94010

Phone: (650) 692-7141

<http://www.dyslexia.com/ddai.htm>

The goals of DDAI are to increase worldwide awareness of the perceptual gifts, talents, or potentials for genius that accompany and give rise to dyslexia. Methods for resolving the learning disability aspects of dyslexia are also promoted.

Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)

The Council for Exceptional Children

1920 Association Drive

Reston, VA 20191

Phone: (703) 620-3660 - TTY: (703) 264-9446 - FAX: (703) 264-9494

<http://www.cec.sped.org/dv>

DLD is the largest international professional organization focused on learning disabilities. TeachingLD is a service of the DLD and its purpose is to provide trustworthy and up-to-date resources about teaching students with learning disabilities.

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)

4156 Library Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15234

<http://www.ldaamerica.org>

The Learning Disabilities Association of America is a national, non-profit organization. Its stated purpose is to advance the education and general welfare of children and adults of normal or potentially normal intelligence who manifest disabilities of a perceptual, conceptual, or coordinative nature.

Local Chapter -

New Mexico Learning Disabilities Association

6301 Menaul Blvd. NE #556

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110-3323

Phone: (505) 821-2545

<http://www.vivanewmexico.com/nmlda>

LD OnLine: Learning Disabilities

Web Site Only

<http://www.ldonline.org>

LD OnLine is a service of The Learning Project at the Washington Educational Telecommunications Association ([WETA](#)), in association with the [Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities](#). LD OnLine provides information about learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

381 Park Avenue South Suite 1401

New York, NY 10016

Toll Free: (888) 575-7373 – Phone: (212) 545-7510 - Fax: (212) 545-9665

<http://www.ld.org>

NCLD is a national organization that provides national leadership in support of children and adults with learning disabilities by offering information, resources, and referral services; developing and supporting innovative programs; promoting public awareness; and advocating for more effective policies and legislation to help individuals with learning disabilities.

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

P.O. Box 1492

Washington, DC 20013

Toll Free: (800) 695-0285

<http://www.nichcy.org>

NICHCY is the national information and referral center that provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues to families, educators, and other professionals. Its special focus is children and youth (birth to age 22).

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

8600 LaSalle Road

Chester Building, Suite 382

Baltimore, MD 21286-2044

Toll Free: (800) ABCD123 - Fax: (410) 321-5069

www.interdys.org

The IDA is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals with dyslexia, their families, and the communities that support them. Its goal is to provide the most comprehensive forum for parents, educators, and researchers to share their experiences, methods, and knowledge.

Information for Educators and Parents

Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA)

13140 Coit Road

Suite 320, LB 120

Dallas, TX 75240-5737

Toll Free: (866) 283-7133 – Fax: (972) 490-4219

www.ALTAread.org

ALTA addresses secondary language and written communication skills through proficiency in reading and writing. Individual academic language therapy programs are designed to meet the needs of those who have been diagnosed with specific dyslexia, dysgraphia, a developmental reading disorder, disorders of written language, and a language learning disability, as well as other related learning problems.

Dyslexia Parents Resource

Web Site Only

<http://www.dyslexia-parent.com>

This site provides information and advice for parents whose children are, or may be, dyslexic. Parents can find information here about symptoms, diagnosis, testing, assessment, and individualized education programs (IEPs).

FastForward

300 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 500

Oakland, CA 94612-2040

<http://www.fastforward.com>

Scientific Learning programs use the principles of brain research to create best practices that will allow someone to use many different approaches to learning, identify reading and language difficulties, and attack the underlying causes of these difficulties.

Get Ready to Read

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

381 Park Avenue South Suite 1401

New York, NY 10016

Toll Free: (888) 575-7373

<http://www.getreadytoread.org>

The NCLD is promoting this program in its belief that too many parents, early childhood teachers, and caregivers are not aware of the type of skills a preschool-age child needs to be ready to learn to read and write. NCLD has a special interest in emergent literacy skills.

International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC)

Dr. Joyce Pickering, President

Shelton School

15720 Hillcrest

Dallas TX 75248

Phone: (972) 774-1772

www.imslec.org

The IMSLEC advocates for high professional standards in the preparation of Multisensory Structured Language specialists — clinicians and teachers; establishing criteria of program excellence; and evaluating and accrediting both independent post-secondary educational programs which offer comprehensive on-site training courses, and programs located within other already accredited institutions.

The Learning Project

WETA Videos

22-D Hollywood Avenue

Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423

Fax: (201) 652-1973

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_store/ldproject.html

WETA, the PBS station that produces LD OnLine, also offers videos by Richard Lavoie and Robert Brooks. Beginning with Richard Lavoie's acclaimed F.A.T. City Workshop, WETA has made a long-term commitment to serving the LD community. It creates television, radio, and Internet programs that address the lives of children with learning disabilities.

Lindamood Bell

Toll Free: (800) 233-1819

<http://www.lblp.com>

For clinic locations go to: <http://www.lblp.com/learningcenters/clinicaldirectory.html>

Lindamood-Bell is an organization that was founded by the authors of programs that claim to develop the sensory-cognitive processes that underlie reading, spelling, language comprehension, math, and visual motor skills. Their Process-Based education™ programs are for individuals ranging from severely learning disabled to academically gifted—ages 5 years through adult.

Orton-Gillingham Method

Web Site Only

<http://www.ols.net/users/orton/page8.htm>

The Orton-Gillingham approach is language-based, multisensory, structured, sequential, cumulative, cognitive, and flexible. It is a philosophy rather than a system.

Project Read

Language Circle® Enterprises

P.O. Box 20631

Bloomington, MN 55420

Toll Free: (800) 450-0343 - Fax: (651) 406-8788

www.projectread.com

Project Read©/Language Circle© is a research-based language arts program for students who need a systematic learning experience with direct teaching of concepts and skills through multisensory techniques. The program is designed to be delivered in the regular classroom or by special education, chapter one, and reading teachers who work with children or adolescents with language learning problems.

Scotopic Sensitivity (Irlen) Syndrome

<http://www.telusplanet.net/~judypool/irlen.htm>

<http://www.irlen.com/NoAm.htm> (for certified practitioners list)

What is Irlen Syndrome? How can you tell if someone has Irlen Syndrome? What does someone with Irlen Syndrome see? What causes Irlen syndrome? What is the treatment for Irlen Syndrome?

Scottish Rite Clinics, Centers, and Programs for Childhood Language Disorders

<http://www.mn-mason.org/language.html>

New Mexico Directory: <http://www.mn-mason.org/language.html#NEW%20MEXICO>

The Scottish Rite initiated a program to help children with speech and language disorders. The results obtained from this program led to the establishment of Scottish Rite clinics that provide diagnostic evaluation and treatment of speech and language disorders, as well as learning disabilities.

Schwab Learning

1650 Amphlett Blvd., Suite 300

San Mateo, CA 94402

Phone: (650) 655-2647

<http://www.schwablearning.org>

Schwab Learning provides support, resources, publications and information free of charge to parents of children with learning differences and to children themselves. The Schwab Learning Fact Sheet provides more in-depth information about their history, services, and perspective on learning differences.

Slingerland Institute for Literacy

One Bellevue Center

411 108th Ave. NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

Phone: (425) 453-1190 - Fax: (425) 635-7762

<http://www.slingerland.org>

The Slingerland Approach is an adaptation of the Orton-Gillingham method and is designed for classroom use. This structured, sequential, simultaneous, multi-sensory teaching approach is designed to help dyslexic students with speaking, reading, writing and spelling. The approach has made it effective in general education classrooms as well as in special education settings.

The Spalding Method®

Web Site Only

<http://www.spalding.org/method.html>

International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) is a nonprofit corporation formed in 1995 to accredit multi-sensory structured language training programs for literacy specialists. The Spalding Method® is their endorsed program for students with dyslexia.

Wilson Reading Method

175 West Main Street

Millbury, MA 01527-1915

Phone: (508) 865-5699 - Fax: (508) 865-9644

<http://www.wilsonacademy.com/>

The mission of the Wilson language training is to address the core reading deficit at the most basic level of language skills – phonological coding. Its goal is to provide teachers with the skills and materials they need to help their students become fluent, independent readers who are ready to explore the world of reading.