

Myths about Dyslexia

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Myth #1: Dyslexia does
not exist

Truth

- Dyslexia is one of the most researched and documented conditions that impact children.
- Over 30 years of independent, scientific, replicated, published research exists on dyslexia

Myth #2: Dyslexia is rare

Truth: Dyslexia affects up to 10-15% of the population

- (Youman & Mather, 2013)

Myth #3: Dyslexia is a
"catch all" term

- Truth: We have a research-based definition of dyslexia
- We know it is a specific neurological learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, poor spelling, and decoding abilities

Myth #4: Dyslexia is more prevalent in males than females

- Truth: It affects boys and girls equally
 - (Shaywitz, Fletcher, & Escobar, 1990)
- But males tend to be identified at a higher rate

Myth #5: People with
dyslexia see things
backwards

Truth: Dyslexia is not a vision
problem (Lyon et al., 2003; Morris et al.,
1998; Rayner et al., 2001)

Kids do reverse letters – but it's caused by
lifelong confusion over left versus right and
by their difficulty reading by sounding
out (Adams, 1990)

Colored overlays or lenses will provide no
benefit American Optometric Association,
2004; Iovino, Fletcher, Breitmeyer, &
Foorman, 1998)

Myth #6: Children
outgrow dyslexia

Truth: Dyslexia is a lifelong issue

- It will not go away (Shaywitz et al., 1999, 2003)
- Waiting is the worst thing you can do
- Early intervention is the best way to prevent or minimize the damage to their self-esteem, their emotional distress, and their fear of going to school

Myth #7: Any child who reverses letters or numbers has dyslexia

- Truth: Reversals during the first two years of handwriting instruction and practice are normal (Blackburne et al., 2014)
- If they continue past two years, it is a warning sign, especially if in the presence of other warning signs

Myth #8: There is no way
to diagnose dyslexia

- Truth: We can screen for dyslexia as early as 3 years old (Petersen & Spencer, 2014)
- We can accurately diagnose dyslexia as early as age 5
- Speech-language pathologists and psychologists can assess a child and make a diagnosis

Myth #9: Dyslexia is a medical diagnosis

- Truth: Doctors do not test for dyslexia because they don't have training in oral language, reading, writing, or spelling assessment and diagnosis
- Dyslexia is not classified as a medical problem
- There is no medical solution for academic struggles with reading, spelling, and writing
- Medical insurance does not cover dyslexia – although it does have lifelong negative effects that can encompass feelings of wellbeing

Myth #10: Dyslexia
cannot be diagnosed until
third grade

Truth: Professionals with in-
depth training can accurately
diagnose dyslexia as early as
age 5.

Myth #11: If you don't teach a child to read by age 9, it's too late

Truth: It's never too late to greatly improve the reading, spelling, and writing skills of someone with dyslexia

Myth #12: Most children outgrow early reading and spelling problems. It's just a developmental delay.

- Truth: If a child is struggling with reading, writing, and spelling in mid-first grade, that child has better than 90% odds of still struggling with those skills in middle school and adulthood
 - (Elbro & Petersen, 2004)

Myth #13: Every child who struggles with reading is dyslexic.

- Truth: Dyslexia is not the only reason a child struggles, but it is the most common one
- How do you know if it's dyslexia?
 - It impacts more than just reading – including spelling, speech, rote memorization of sequences and facts

Myth #14: Most teachers
know the warning signs of
dyslexia

- Truth: Don't rely on teachers to alert you to a problem
- Most teachers have not had formal training in dyslexia