

Dyslexia Misconceptions

Misconception: *Writing letters and words backwards means a person has dyslexia.*

Fact: Writing letters and words backwards may occur with any child prior to second grade and up to age eight or nine. Dyslexia is not a yes or no, but it is a range with some individuals showing mild symptoms while others will have more severe symptoms.

Misconception: *Dyslexia is caused by vision problems.*

Fact: Dyslexia is caused by a neurological disability that changes how the brain processes language. It is not a visual disorder that can be cured with glasses. Early screening and early diagnosis with evidence-based interventions along with appropriate classroom accommodations are the most effective way to help children with the characteristics of dyslexia.

Misconception: *Dyslexia can be outgrown or cured.*

Fact: Early screening, identification of “at risk” or “at some risk” characteristics, and intervention are keys to success. Students also must receive explicit, systematic, cumulative, diagnostic, and multisensory interventions that target the students’ needs. These strategies will teach skills needed to become a successful reader, but dyslexia is a lifelong condition that cannot be “cured”.

Misconception: *Children with dyslexia are lazy and just need to try harder to learn.*

Fact: Dyslexia is caused by neurological processes and neurological differences beyond the child’s control. Students with characteristics of dyslexia come from different backgrounds but all struggle with reading. Some may observe these behaviors as lazy or a disinterest in reading, when the actual situation may come from a poor self-image or low self-esteem from the stress and academic failures in reading.

Misconception: *More phonics instruction is all that is needed to help students.*

Fact: While phonics instruction is beneficial to students with characteristics of dyslexia, it is only a piece of the reading instruction. Students need a strong foundation in phonological and phonemic awareness, and alphabet knowledge along with phonics and decoding.

Misconception: *Only boys have dyslexia.*

Fact: Dyslexia affects a similar number of boys and girls according to the research. However, more boys are referred for evaluation from dyslexia.

Misconception: *Dyslexia is not that common.*

Fact: As many as 15-20 percent of the population has some form of the characteristics of dyslexia according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity.

Misconception: *You cannot tell if a child is dyslexic until they are in school learning to read.*

Fact: Dr. Shaywitz’s book titled “Overcoming Dyslexia” states that often an early indicator of dyslexia is delayed speech and trouble recognizing rhyming words. A family history of dyslexia is also often an early indicator of dyslexia. Please refer to the section on characteristics of dyslexia for different age groups and grade levels for a more complete list of indicators of dyslexia.

Misconception: *Dyslexia only affects children who learn in English.*

Fact: Since dyslexia is a neurological disorder that affects how the brain processes of speech sounds, so children learning in any language can be affected by dyslexia.

Misconception: *Those with dyslexia will not be successful in life.*

Fact: There are many people with dyslexia that are very successful and leaders in their field. Famous inventors, scientists, architects, mathematicians, computer engineers and scientists, entrepreneurs and business leaders, actors, musicians, and writers have all be diagnosed with dyslexia and changed the world. Just because someone with dyslexia may struggle in one area does NOT mean they cannot be successful! To learn more success stories of those who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, please visit The Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity website of [Success Stories](#).

Citations:

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