

DYSGRAPHIA

Dysgraphia is a learning disability that affects writing ability and fine motor skills. It interferes with spelling, word spacing, and the general ability to put thoughts on paper, and makes the process of writing laboriously slow. Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder that can affect both children and adults.

-ADDitude Magazine, <https://www.additudemag.com/what-is-dysgraphia-understanding-common-symptoms/>

SIGNS

- Kids with dysgraphia have unclear, irregular, or inconsistent handwriting, often with different slants, shapes, upper- and lower-case letters, and cursive and print styles. They also tend to write or copy things slowly.
- Parents or teachers may notice symptoms when the child first begins writing assignments in school. Other signs of dysgraphia to watch for include:
 - Awkward or cramped grip, which may lead to a sore hand
 - Difficulty spacing things out on paper or within margins (poor spatial planning)
 - Difficulty following a line or staying within margins
 - Frequent erasing
 - Inconsistency in letter and word spacing
 - Trouble forming letters or spacing words consistently
 - Has difficulty pre-visualizing letter formation
 - Poor spelling, including unfinished words or missing words or letters
 - Unusual wrist, body, or paper position while writing
 - Trouble with sentence structure or following rules of grammar when writing, but not when speaking
 - Difficulty organizing or articulating thoughts on paper
 - Copying or writing is slow or labored
 - Pronounced difference between spoken and written understanding of a topic
 - This learning disability also makes it hard to write and think at the same time.
 - Creative writing tasks are often especially hard.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Suggest use of word processor
- Avoid chastising student for sloppy, careless work
- Use oral exams
- Allow use of tape recorder for lectures
- Allow the use of a note taker
- Provide notes or outlines to reduce the amount of writing required
- Reduce copying aspects of work (pre-printed math problems)
- Allow use of wide rule paper and graph paper
- Suggest use of pencil grips and /or specially designed writing aids
- Provide alternatives to written assignments (video-taped reports, audio-taped reports)

TO LEARN MORE

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DIFFERENT KINDS OF DYSGRAPHIA

- **Dyslexic dysgraphia:** In this form of dysgraphia, spontaneously written text (meaning writing that hasn't been traced or copied) is most strongly affected, and is often illegible, particularly as it goes on. Spelling, either oral or written, is extremely poor. Drawing and copying are not affected. Finger-tapping speed, a commonly used measure of fine motor skills, is in the normal range
- **Motor dysgraphia:** Motor dysgraphia most strongly affects fine motor skills, so finger-tapping speed is highly abnormal. All forms of writing, either spontaneous or copied, are close to illegible. Drawing and tracing skills are far below average. Spelling skills are usually normal.
- **Spatial dysgraphia:** This type of dysgraphia most strongly affects the spatial relationship between the writing itself and the medium on which it's written. This means all forms of handwriting, and particularly drawing, are highly problematic. On the other hand, finger-tapping speed and spelling skills are close to normal.

INSTRUCTION

- Children with impaired handwriting benefit from activities that support learning to form letters
- Once children learn to form legible letters, they benefit from instruction that helps them develop automatic letter writing, using the following steps to practice each of the 26 letters of the alphabet in a different order daily
- To developing handwriting speed, they benefit from writing letters during composing daily for 5 to 10 minutes on a teacher-provided topic.
- Students benefit from explicit instruction in spelling throughout K-12
 - Initially in high frequency words;
 - Subsequently in coordinating the phonological, orthographic, and morphological processes relevant for the spelling of longer, more complex, less frequent words; and,
 - At all grade levels in the most common and important words used for the different academic domains of the curriculum.
- Throughout K -12, students benefit from strategies for composing
 - Planning, generating, reviewing/evaluating, and revising
 - Compositions of different genre including narrative, informational, compare and contrast, and persuasive
 - Self-regulation strategies for managing the complex executive functions involved in composing.

Sources: ADDitude Magazine, Learning Disabilities Association of America, WebMD, International Dyslexia Association