

# THE DYSLEXIA REVOLUTION

Quarterly Newsletter from The Dyslexia Initiative



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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

We are excited to launch our quarterly newsletter. Our goal is to share with you great information that you can quickly print off and hand out or forward via email to any friends, colleagues, school board members, teachers, administrators, whomever. Within these pages we will provide key information and some great articles to assist you on the journey that is dyslexia.

You can subscribe to be a member of our website at [www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org](http://www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org). We will never sell any information provided to us, that is a promise. It will be a great way to keep up with our latest informational offerings as well as serve as a much needed resource in your advocacy toolkit. We welcome your questions and feedback. You can email us at [info@TheDyslexiaInitiative.org](mailto:info@TheDyslexiaInitiative.org).

And as always you can follow us on Facebook @DyslexiaInitiative and Twitter at [dyslexia\\_the](https://twitter.com/dyslexia_the), and don't forget to check out our current state support groups, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New York, South Carolina, area groups North Texas Parents, Houston, TX and Katy, TX, and our general community support group. For more information, check our our web page.



# RESEARCH PROVES HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO READ

Convincing scientific evidence about how children learn to read has been available for decades. In 1986, The Simple View of Reading was proposed by researchers Philip B. Gough and William E. Tunmer. In 2000, the federally-appointed National Reading Panel identified the Five Pillars of Literacy as: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Skilled reading is a combination of decoding and language comprehension. Dr Hollis Scarborough's famous "Reading Rope" provides a visual representation of the decoding skills required for successful word recognition, and the comprehension strategies required for successful language comprehension with the strands being fully woven together in skilled readers.

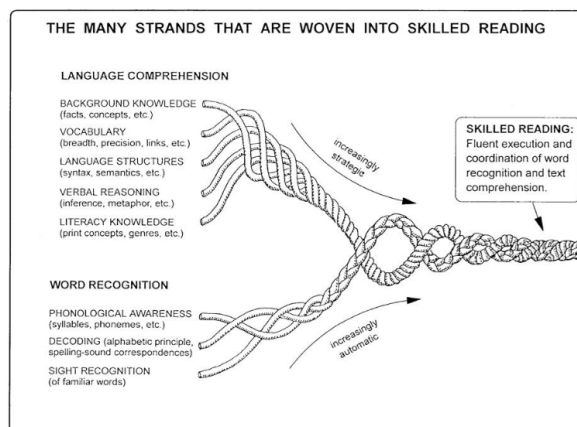


Image courtesy of the author, originally appeared in : Scarborough HS (2001). Connecting early language & literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, Theory & Practice. In S. Neuma & D. Dickinson (eds.) "Handbook for Research in Early Literacy" (pp 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press

## READING INSTRUCTION GETS ATTENTION IN THE NATIONAL MEDIA

In the past 18 months, an important national conversation about how reading is taught has emerged in the media. Sparked by American Media Reports' Emily Hanford, reading instruction has been covered in The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, EdWeek, and other national media outlets. Here's a sampling of media coverage about the Science of Reading:

Cracking the Code of Dyslexia (CBS This Morning, Aug. 25, 2019) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cracking-the-code-of-dyslexia/>

Hard Words: Why Aren't Our Kids Being Taught to Read (APMReports.org, Sept. 10, 2018) <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2018/09/10/hard-words-why-american-kids-arent-being-taught-to-read>

At a Loss for Words: How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers (APMReports.org, Aug. 22, 2019) <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2019/08/22/whats-wrong-how-schools-teach-reading>

How Do Kids Learn to Read Series (EdWeek, Oct. 2, 2019) <https://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/how-do-kids-learn-to-read.html>

## HOW TO MAKE DYSLEXIA SCREENING SUCCESSFUL

Universal screening for dyslexia is one of the most promising reforms in the field of literacy with more than 21 states having passed laws for dyslexia screening, yet the screening process is fraught with challenges to the educational system, children, and parents. Currently there are over 20 different screening tools being used across the states with no consensus on which tools are the most effective. Unfortunately there are no formal or standardized guidelines for screening.

According to the National Center on Improving Literacy these points are critical to a successful screening program:

- Select screening assessment(s) through a careful process that takes into account the population of interest, the scope of the assessment, the reliability and validity of scores, and the accuracy of the screener.
- Administer screening assessment(s) at necessary intervals.
- Keep a database of screening findings and generate a screening report.
- After a school-wide screening has occurred, hold grade level team meetings and cross-discipline team meetings in upper grades to analyze the screening results and discuss students.
- Engage parents/families in decision making and keep them updated on their child's performance.

<https://improvingliteracy.org/files/whitepaper/screening-for-dyslexia.pdf>

# DEBUNKING DYSLEXIA MYTHS

## "Dyslexia is uncommon."

1 in 5 students have a language-based disability with dyslexia being the most common of these. Over 40 million adult Americans have dyslexia but only 2 million may know they do. Dyslexia occurs in 20% of school aged children in the United States. Dyslexia also occurs across the globe in non-English speaking countries and in persons of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

## "Dyslexia cannot be diagnosed before third grade."

Trained professionals can diagnose the precursors of dyslexia as early as 4-5 years old. Deficits in phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, verbal working memory, and letter knowledge have been shown to be precursors of dyslexia in children as young as three (Puolakanaho et.al, 2007). Unfortunately a "wait to fail" approach is the common approach, meaning the child needs to demonstrate significant prolonged struggles in reading before any intervention strategies are used (Gaab, 2017).

## "There is no genetic component to dyslexia."

Dyslexia is strongly genetic, with over 50% of individuals having a first degree relative with dyslexia (Pennington, 1991). The risk increases exponentially when both parents are affected (Wolff & Melngailis, 1994). Knowing a family's history of reading disabilities is essential for evaluating a child's risk of language-based disabilities and is a key component to screening for dyslexia.

## "The term 'dyslexia' should not be used in an IEP or an evaluation."

The term dyslexia can and should be clearly stated in both an IEP and evaluation. Both federal special education law (IDEA) and new federal general education law (ESSA) use specific terms like dyslexia, not just specific learning disability. In April 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued a guidance letter stating nothing prohibits schools from using the term dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

## "Dyslexia is a visual problem."

Dyslexia is not caused by visual issues but rather by a phonological deficit and difficulty processing language. Dyslexics do not see words or letters backwards or upside down. Many young children reverse letters when learning to read or write but beyond age 7 it could signal a language-based problem.

## "Dyslexia never occurs in children with normal or above average reading comprehension."

Often a child with normal or high reading comprehension has a form of dyslexia known as stealth dyslexia or hidden dyslexia. These students may "fly under the radar" until later in school when the material increases in complexity and volume. Like other children with dyslexia, they can have difficulty with phonemic awareness, spelling, and writing. Many of these children may also be twice exceptional with verbal IQs in the highly or profoundly gifted range, which often causes delays in identification

# THE FORGOTTEN CHILD

In this newsletter we are showcasing Jake Sussman and the video where Harvey Hubbell V and seedling.tv featured Jake's message that is The Forgotten Child.



"Imagine yourself as the child that always smiled

You were wild, you were beguiled —

Until the day you were profiled.

This is the story of the forgotten child."

A powerful and emotional share about the educational system leaving behind a bright young and capable child, this is a story you will not want to miss. You can watch the video here:

<https://youtu.be/YBcW-T7pAnw>

## Dyslexia In the Classroom: What Every Teacher Needs to Know

Download this indispensable guide from The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

<https://dyslexiaida.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DITC-Handbook.pdf>





## DYSLEXIA COFFEE TALK

Join us on Saturday mornings, live on our Facebook page for Dyslexia Coffee Talk. Each week we discuss a different topic in our mission to educate and empower parents on their advocacy journey for their children. To date we have discussed Whole Language versus Balanced Literacy as well as the differences in Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, and more. We have a great list of guests lined up for January and will be excited to keep this journey going. Don't worry if you miss a live session, the videos are stored on our Facebook page and we load the videos to our YouTube channel every Monday



## THE DYSLEXIA INITIATIVE BLOG



Have you checked out our blog? We publish articles that support various topics in our dyslexia world. Our leadership are all parents of a dyslexic child. Some of us have dyslexia ourselves, some of us do not, but dyslexia touches all of our lives. We share our learnings, insights, and try our best to offer guidance on what we should be striving for in our advocacy.

Check it out at [www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org/blog](http://www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org/blog) to access the articles published to date.

## FEATURED BLOG POSTS

Reading Below Grade Level

<https://www.thedyslexiainitiative.org/post/reading-below-grade-level>

The 12 Stages

<https://www.thedyslexiainitiative.org/post/the-12-stages>

504 v IDEA

<https://www.thedyslexiainitiative.org/post/504-v-idea>

What Does 80% Mean

<https://www.thedyslexiainitiative.org/post/what-does-80-mean>

Don't forget to register for updates like our newsletter and more on our website,  
[www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org](http://www.TheDyslexiaInitiative.org).

