



Early Screening for Dyslexia

Presented by:

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What is Screening?

Screening is a *brief* evaluation to identify the risk for reading problems, including dyslexia.

Why Screen for Dyslexia?

Early detection of dyslexia leads to early intervention, and early intervention is far more effective than waiting for children to fail. The purpose of screening is to identify which children are at greater risk for dyslexia, and require further testing. Screening is **not** the same as a diagnosis.

How does Screening Work?

Screening is the brief assessment of a skill or set of skills that are related to reading. Standardized screening tools have cut scores that identify a child's level of risk depending on their age or grade level. A student who is identified as having high risk on a screening measure should be referred for further testing. For dyslexia, there are several skills that could be part of a screening process, including, but not limited to:

1. Phonological Processing (includes phonemic awareness)
2. Rapid naming (of letters, objects, colors, digits)
3. Alphabet knowledge (name the individual letters)
4. Letter-Sound Correspondence – (knowing that 'sh' makes the sound /sh/)
5. Word reading, and oral reading fluency
6. Spelling
7. Handwriting
8. Language processing
9. Family history (children of a dyslexic parent are more likely to have dyslexia)

What are the Limitations of Screening Measures and their Results?

Dyslexia is complex, and even though the factors listed above are predictive of later reading outcomes, the relationship is not perfect. For example, poor phonological processing underlies many cases of dyslexia, but not all students with dyslexia have poor phonological processing, and not all students with poor phonological processing will develop dyslexia.

Another challenge with screening is that the relationship of different skills to later reading outcomes changes over time. This means that screening tools should differ depending on the age level of the student.

Finally, screening tools include measurement error. False positives are common – this is when a child is identified as at-risk but is not. False negatives are of particular concern – this is when a child is identified as not-at-risk but actually is. Screening 3x per school year is recommended.

On-Line Resources for More Information about Early Screening

California Dyslexia Guidelines

The California Department of Education published a set of guidelines around dyslexia, including information about screening and a list of assessments that might be used to screen and evaluate for dyslexia. The exact address is below, or a Google search with the terms "California Dyslexia Guidelines" should take you to the document.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/cadyslexiaguidelines.pdf>

Gaab Lab

This is a research center located in Boston's Children's Hospital. The link will take you to a list of screening resources and information about dyslexia.

<https://www.gaablab.com/screening-for-reading-impairments>

International Dyslexia Association

You can find some online screening measures here, including the Adult Reading History Questionnaire and the Colorado Learning Disabilities Questionnaire. <https://dyslexiaida.org>

Lee Pesky Learning Center

We are engaged in innovative research to create non-language based, early screeners of phonological processing. Read more about our work, and contact us if you're interested in participating in our research.

<https://www.lplearningcenter.org/discover/early-detection/>

National Center on Improving Literacy

Petscher, Y., Fien, H., Stanley, C., Gearin, B., Gaab, N., Fletcher, J.M., & Johnson, E. S. (2019). *Screening for Dyslexia*. Retrieved from <https://improvingliteracy.org/>

Understood

This website provides information for parents of children with learning and attention challenges. There is information about screening and evaluation.

<https://www.understood.org/en>

Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity

Dr. Sally Shaywitz, the nation's leading authority on dyslexia, works for this center and is the developer of the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screen, a teacher questionnaire that reports on students' behaviors/characteristics that have been associated with dyslexia.

<https://dyslexia.yale.edu>

Questions? Feel free to email: ejohnson@lplearningcenter.org or call us at 208-333-0008.