

What is Dyslexia?

- SLD (Specific learning difficulty)
- Neurodevelopmental disorder.
- A learning difficulty that primarily affects skills in accurate reading and writing (British Dyslexia Association, 2010)
- Unlike a learning disability it does not affect intelligence (BDA, 2022; NHS, 2022)
- 1/10 people in the UK have some degree of Dyslexia (NHS, 2022)
- A lifelong condition which affects everyday life (NHS, 2022).
- Genetic (BDA 2022; NHS, 2022),
- Co-morbidity – can occur alongside other disorders.
- Multi – Deficit Model of Dyslexia (Kelly and Phillips, 2016).

(Source: Neuron Learning, 2018).

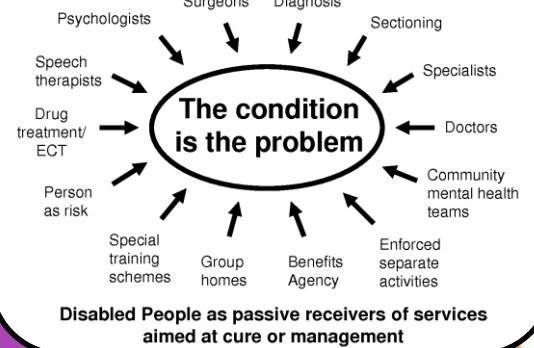
Signs and Symptoms in Early Years (BDA, 2022)

- Delayed speech development.
- Poor auditory discrimination and muddling words.
- Difficulty learning names and sounds of letters, learning nursery rhymes and activities requiring fine motor skills.
- Poor memory.
- Lack of phonological awareness.
- Inability to sit still and concentrate – poor attention span.,
- Difficulty in following instructions.

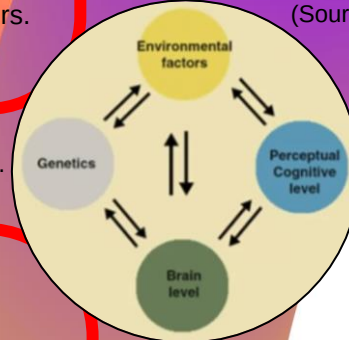
Diagnosis in Early Years Children (BDA, 2022; NHS, 2022)

- Diagnostic Dyslexia assessment.
- Only carried out by a specialist practitioner.
- Referral from a teacher required.
- Preferable to have conducted early intervention strategies prior to referral.
- These are comprehensive, complicated and time consuming.

Medical (Individual) Model of Disability:



(Source: Van Den Bosch, no date).



(Source: Hepple, 2016).

However,

Social Model of Disability



Social Model of Disability states that the oppression and exclusion people with impairments face is caused by the way society is run and organised.

- Linked to attitudes of the medical profession. (Toro, *et al.*, 2020).
- Out of date – compiled in the 1950s. (Toro, *et al.*, 2020).
- Promotes the idea that disabilities are defects that require treatment to be cured. (Guevera, 2021; Scope, no date).
- Perpetuates stigma and discrimination, limiting the values of people and quashing individuality. (Guevera, 2021; Scope, no date).
- Advertises the idea of 'normal' – disability is 'ab-normal'. (Guevera, 2021).

- These barriers are a lack of social organisation (Watson and Vehmas, 2020).
- Children's activities are not limited by Dyslexia, but by the environment they are in. (Watson and Vehmas, 2020).
- Developed by disabled individuals to initiate equality and support their human rights (Scope, no date).
- Provides positivity and the dynamics to identify the cause of barriers and promote solutions (Scope, no date).
- Society should make changes not disabled people (Scope, no date).

To conclude: Dyslexia is a complex condition which affects more than just literacy ability. It is important to invest in intervention programmes to support Dyslexic learners to achieve their utmost.

Strategies for Dyslexia in Early Years Children

Dyslexia without interventions can lead to underachievement, poor motivation and low self-esteem (NHS Scotland, 2018).

Successful Early Years programmes should be:

1. Structured,
 2. Multi-sensory,
 3. Support overlearning,
 4. Phonetical
- (Snowling, 2013; Kelly and Phillips, 2016)

Example: Multi-sensory Play (Lee, 2022; Kelly & Phillips, 2016)

Why? The primary sensory systems concerned with language development are auditory, visual and tactile. Simultaneous interaction of these can create success in language perception and development in early years children through parts of the sensorimotor system supporting each other to make sound – symbol associations.

- Examples – Toe to Toe, Multisensory Language Course, Word Wasp.
- 1:1 delivery, comprehensive and structured to increase impact.
- Activity ideas – rhyming and singing, using different mediums for mark making – chalk, shaving foam, playdoh, air writing.
- Fun and engaging activities promotes overlearning and repetition building on memory improvement.

Benefits (Lee, 2022; Kelly & Phillips, 2016) -

Accessible, proven, adaptable for different ability levels, engaging, focusses on all aspects of dyslexia including memory.

Negatives (Snowling, 2013; Lee, 2022) – Expensive, requires staff training to allow implementation, no intervention programme benefits all therefore some children may not respond positively.

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