

DYSLEXIA

What is dyslexia?

The meaning of the word 'dyslexia' is split between 'dys' which means difficult, and 'lexia' meaning words, reading or language. This clearly defines the meaning of dyslexia which is difficulties with words, reading or language. However, Hudson, R.F., High, L. and Otaiba, S.A., (2007) tell us that dyslexia is misunderstood a lot of the time.

People who are typically diagnosed with dyslexia are otherwise capable individuals in other aspects and would be thought to be accessible of mainstream education. Of all learning disabilities, dyslexia is the most prominent and widely studied of them, affecting 80% of individuals with a learning disability (Shaywitz, S.E., 1998) and thought to affect 10% of the population (Council, H.C., 2016).

Cause of dyslexia

Dyslexia is caused by the person mainly using the right half of their brain when they are tasked with reading and spelling.

Dyslexic readers rely greatly on the Broca's area at the left frontal lobe of the brain, as seen in figure 1, whereas stronger readers use other parts of their brain which is used whilst fluently reading and recognising words quickly.

The Broca area of the brain does not process reading, writing and basic sounds of language. Meaning people with dyslexia struggle to make necessary connections. Although this information is of knowledge, it is not yet fully understood why the right side (Broca) of the brain is not as efficient at reading and writing and why people with dyslexia use this part of their brain. (Council, H.C., 2016).

Dyslexia in Early years

Children in their early years learn through their natural curiosity and enthusiasm. Offering environments to children where they are able to feel safe, secure and confident, they will be more able and willing to learn. Children's development and learning depends on their environments and opportunities. Children in their early years who may be falling behind in some aspects of their development, may not have had as many opportunities to thrive and experience different kinds of learning. Adults are the scaffold for children's learning- which Vygotsky discusses in further depth (Berk, L.E. and Winsler, A., 1995).

Early stages of learning take place through play, which teaches children language, social and symbolic skills. Some children do not always acquire the same level of literacy skills as others. These children may require additional support and time from adults. Children who are eventually diagnosed with dyslexia often struggle in their literacy development in these stages of life (Hartas, D., 2013).

There is a controversial aspect to the diagnosis of dyslexia in the Early Years. It is questioned that children may be too young to be diagnosed as they all develop skills at different rates. This is why children should not be diagnosed before the age of seven. Children may have presented signs before this age for dyslexia, however a open mind to their personal developmental rate should be kept in mind (The School Psychology Service, 2020).

Support

It is of growing discussion about the affects of interventions for pupils with dyslexia. (Snowling, M.J., 2013).

There are higher rates of effectiveness if interventions are started from a young age. These interventions depend on the individual child and the extent of their additional needs. Children in mainstream schools with dyslexia can often get the correct support and interventions needed there. Interventions that would be offered in mainstream schools include additional support from learning support assistants who are able to work in smaller groups or on a 1-to-1 basis, Phonological skills can be developed as children are encouraged and helped with identifying and recognising sounds, combining letters and understanding what they are reading. For a better impact from these interventions, they should be continued regularly (NHS, 2022).

De Beer, J., Engels, J., Heerkens, Y. and van der Klink, J., (2014) has also expanded how assistive technology can help through enabling extra time, recorded textbooks, or bigger font throughout education.

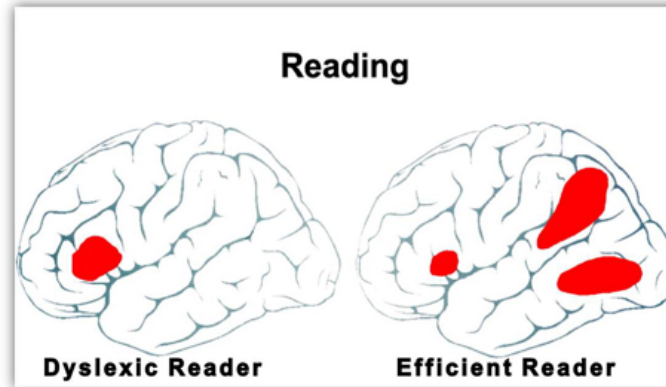


Figure 1-The dyslexic Brain and causes of Dyslexia
(The Reading Well, no date),

Barriers

Children with dyslexia can potentially face many difficulties throughout life. It is suggested by Thomas, C. (2004) That the inadequacy of enabling environments and opportunities for those with disabilities, may leave them feeling under appreciated and can greatly affect their well beings and opportunities to thrive and develop.

Children who are in mainstream education in the United Kingdom are expected to conform to the national curriculum which later in school years includes tests, reading, writing and many other lessons.

Children's performances are recorded during these years. Students with dyslexia face this pressure during school (Jacobs, L., Parke, A., Ziegler, F., Headleand, C. and De Angeli, A., 2022).

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Diagnosis- how it's identified

40% to 60% of children with dyslexia also experience traits from anxiety, depression and attention deficit disorders.

Children being diagnosed with dyslexia undertake tests for reading and spelling. There will be an evaluation on the child for their emotional and mental wellbeing. Views from parents and teachers are taken into consideration through this diagnosis.

Treatment and help for children with dyslexia can be given through specific assistance and support for the child with their reading and spelling, and psychotherapy can be offered to support the child with any psychological disturbances they may be facing as well as their dyslexia. There are also some preventive strategies that can be used in the early years (Schulte-Körne, G., 2010).

Dyslexia screening can be taken on children age five and above by schools or specialist assessors. These screenings can identify signs of dyslexia early on, where interventions can then be put in place quickly and effectively (The school psychology service, 2020). A controversy is that English speaking children struggle with reading and writing because of the complex language and spelling code, rather than atypical genes and the need for dyslexia diagnosis. (and Norah Frederickson, B.H., 2015),

Benefits of diagnosis

There are speculations and a general agreement that dyslexia affects more boys than it does girls.

The Early years foundation stage profile have proposed that difficulties in reading and writing can be identified through the development of children's early years. It is stated that a screening tool is able to identify these difficulties and create an early diagnosis of dyslexia. However there are arguments that screening tools are not accurate and children's developments should be observed and checked instead or as well as screening. Another approach from RTI steers away from screening and monitors progress of children through a curriculum (Snowling, M.J., 2013).

Conclusion

In summary, there has been a great deal of research to support people diagnosed with dyslexia. Interventions are in place and are constantly working to improve and impact the lives of these people. Although later life can be challenging through work, if interventions and support are provided at a young age, these children will thrive throughout life with very little struggle regarding reading and writing.

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