

Dyslexia

Understanding, Identification, and
Evidence-Based Intervention
A Training for Special Education
Directors

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Region One ESC Meeting Norms



Be Curious

- Shift judgment to curiosity.
- Shift conflict into shared exploration.
- Shift defensiveness into self-reflection.
- Shift assumptions into questions.



Be Courageous

- Embrace challenges as opportunities.
- Embrace the unknown and take risks.
- Embrace false starts, mistakes, and iterative improvements.



Be Cognizant

- Consider emerging patterns in the whole, part, and greater whole to inform the work.
- Consider the assets of self and others.
- Consider research and evidence to inform the work.



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2025-2030 Region One ESC's Strategic Plan

OUR MISSION

To be the premier partner for every school system in our region, empowering all learners to strive for educational excellence, personal and community success, and regional transformation.

OUR VISION

To improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in our region.

OUR TEAM VALUES

INNOVATION COLLABORATION ACCOUNTABILITY
INTEGRITY TRUST

OUR CORE PRIORITIES



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Agenda

- Fact or Fiction Game
- Understanding Dyslexia
- Texas Education Agency Updates
- Evidence-Based Instruction
- Best Practices & Case Studies



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OUR

GOALS

1. **Improve Student Outcomes and Lifelong Success** - *Enhance academic achievement, college and career readiness, and access to high-quality learning experiences to empower all learners from early childhood through adulthood.*
2. **Elevate Educator and Organizational Excellence** - *Develop high-quality, innovative professional learning systems, technology integration, and performance management practices that build educator capacity and foster a culture of continuous improvement.*
3. **Strengthen Strategic Partnerships and Community Impact** - *Deepen partnerships with families, school systems, higher education, industry, and community organizations to expand services, align resources, and improve educational, economic, and social outcomes across the region.*



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The children were excited to meet their teacher at the library. They wanted to choose a new book to read tonight. The teacher said they needed to complete their homework first.



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Fact or Fiction?

Let's test your knowledge about
dyslexia



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**Dyslexia is just seeing letters
backward**

TRUE

FALSE



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Dyslexia only affects reading

TRUE

FALSE



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Students with dyslexia have low intelligence

TRUE

FALSE



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Dyslexia can be outgrown

TRUE

FALSE



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Dyslexia affects 15-20% of the population

TRUE

FALSE



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Dyslexia is caused by vision problems

TRUE

FALSE



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Early intervention is critical for success with dyslexia

TRUE

FALSE



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Understanding Dyslexia

Definition, Characteristics, and Neurobiology



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What is Dyslexia?

"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both and vary depending on the orthography. These difficulties occur along a continuum of severity and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual's peers. The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve combinations of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences that interact throughout development. Underlying difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common but not universal, and early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include reading comprehension problems and reduced reading and writing experience that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement.

Psychological well-being and employment opportunities also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective."

-International Dyslexia Association - 2025



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Core Characteristics of Dyslexia



Reading

Slow, inaccurate word reading, difficulty decoding unfamiliar words, poor reading fluency

Phonological Processing

Difficulty with rhyming, trouble blending sounds, challenges segmenting words

Spelling

Inconsistent spelling patterns, difficulty with phonetic spelling, omission or reversal of letters



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Core Characteristics of Dyslexia



Rapid Naming

Slow retrieval of familiar words, word finding difficulties, slow processing of symbols

Writing

Difficulty organizing thoughts on paper, poor written expression despite verbal ability, slow writing speed

Working Memory

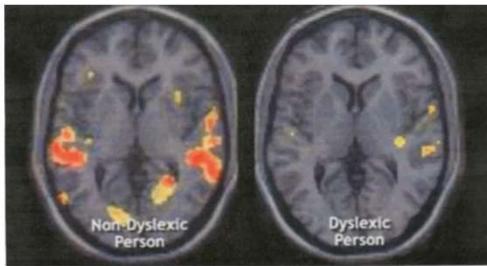
Difficulty remembering multi-step directions, challenges with rote memorization, trouble holding information while processing



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Neurological Differences in Dyslexia



Key Research Findings:

- Reduced activity in left-hemisphere reading regions
- Weaker connections between brain areas
- Over reliance on right-hemisphere compensation
- Difficulty with rapid, automatic processing

The Phonological Core Deficit:

- **Primary challenge:** mapping letters to sounds
- **Secondary effects:** fluency, spelling, vocabulary acquisition
- **NOT an intelligence issue**

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Common Comorbidities

Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with other conditions:

ADHD

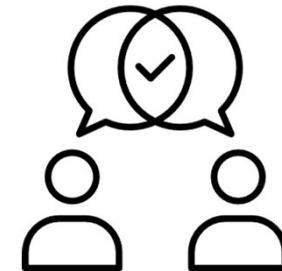
30-50% co-occurrence. Both impact learning.

Dysgraphia

Difficulty with handwriting and/or written expression. Often seen together.

Dyscalculia

Math specific learning disability.



Executive Function

Challenges with organization, time management, and task completion



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The Strengths of Dyslexia

Big Picture Thinking
A strong ability to see patterns and connections across different ideas.

Spatial Reasoning
Enhanced visual-spatial abilities and strong 3D thinking skills.

Problem Solving
Utilizes creative approaches to find innovative solutions to challenges.

Verbal Communication
Often possesses strong oral language and storytelling abilities.

Resilience
Develops perseverance from the experience of overcoming challenges.

Empathy
Shows strong interpersonal skills and high emotional intelligence.

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NotebookLM

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2024 Dyslexia Handbook Updates

- Dyslexia Instruction IS Specialized Instruction
- Required MDT/ARD member with dyslexia expertise (LDT, CALT preferred)
- First-grade screening (no later than January 31)
- Clarified Provider of Dyslexia Instructor (PDI) qualifications
 - Must be fully trained in LEA's adopted evidence-based program, must be a certified teacher

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Dyslexia is an example of and meets the definition of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) under IDEA.

Evaluation Requirements

- MDT must include someone with knowledge of dyslexia and related disorders
- Overview of Special Education for Parents must be provided when dyslexia is suspected
- Comprehensive evaluation must assess reading process

ARD Committee Decisions

- Must consider dyslexia instruction needs in IEP
- Student continues under Section 504 or special education as appropriate
- Progress monitoring and reporting requirements apply



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Screening & Identification Timeline

Anytime

Teacher or parent referral
Based on observation of reading difficulties

Grade 1

Mid-year universal screening (by January 31)
Decoding, encoding, fluency

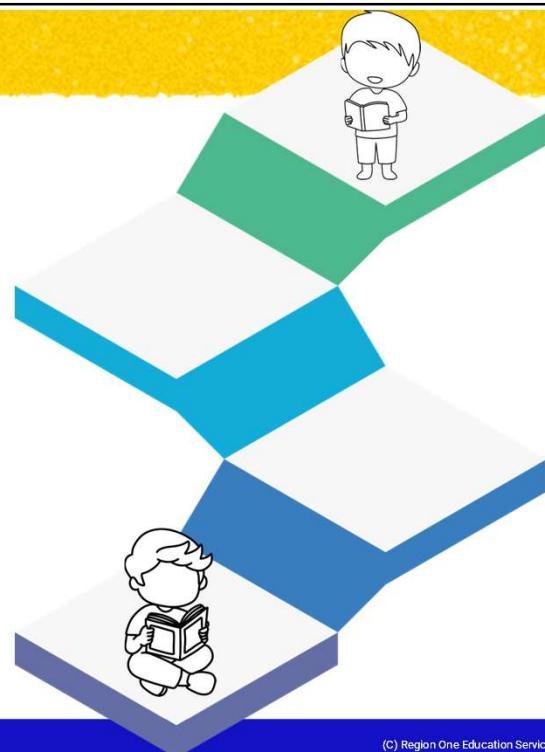
Kindergarten

Universal screening for risk factors
Letter knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid naming



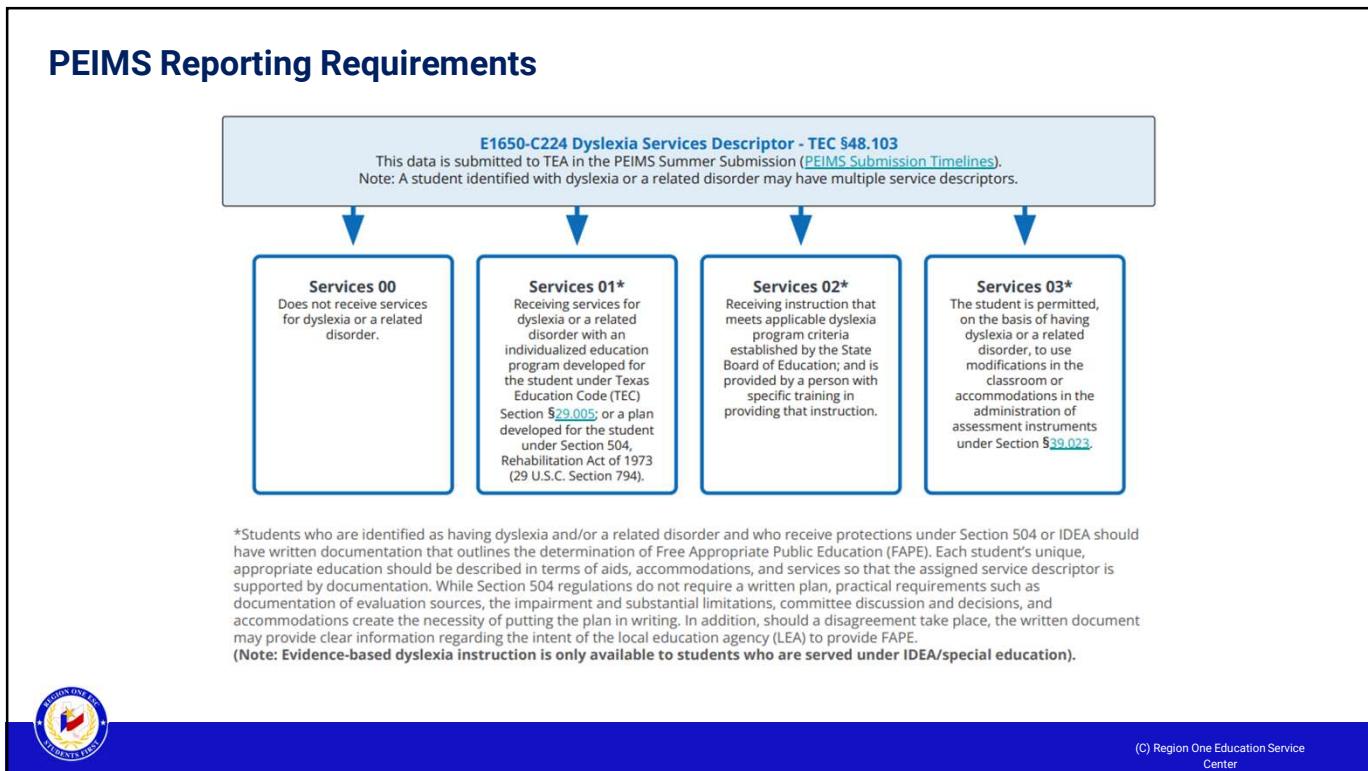
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THE DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK

Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders

2024 Update

THE DYSLEXIA HANDBOOK | REGION ONE EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER



Cyclical Review



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Question 1

Did the ARD committee discuss how the student will access the evidence-based dyslexia program, including whether the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) or other areas of the IEP show evidence that the program must be supplemented with a focus on one or more components?

What This is Asking:

- Which specific evidence-based dyslexia program with this student use?
- Based on the evaluation data, does the program address ALL of the student's needs?
- If not, which components need additional focus or supplementation?



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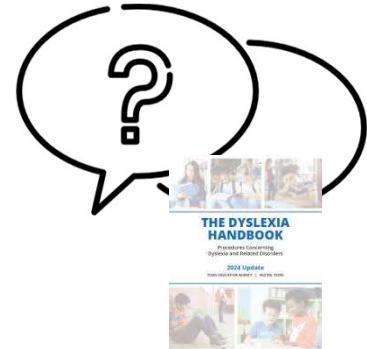
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Question 2

Did the ARD committee address how the dyslexia program addresses the required instructional delivery as described in the Handbook, and whether the student's PLAAFP or other areas of the IEP show evidence that the program must be supplemented to meet the student's needs?

What This is Asking:

- Does the selected dyslexia program deliver instruction using the five required characteristics? (Explicit, Systematic, Multisensory, Diagnostic, Synthetic/Analytic)
- If the program doesn't fully address these, what supplementation is needed?



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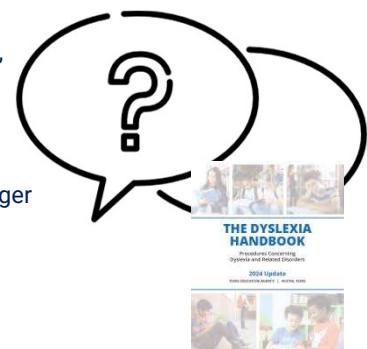
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Question 3

Did the ARD committee address the fidelity statements and requirements that are included with the dyslexia program, and how those will be delivered and/or intensified for the student?

What This is Asking:

- What does the program require for fidelity? (frequency, duration, group size, sequence, materials)
- How will we ensure we are following the fidelity of the program exactly as designed?
- If the student needs more intensive support, how will we intensify? (smaller group, longer sessions, more frequent)



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Question 4

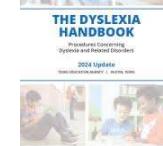
Did the ARD committee confirm that the provider of dyslexia instruction (PDI) is fully trained in the instructional materials to implement the program?

What This is Asking:

- Has the person delivering instruction completed the required training for the specific program that has been adopted by the LEA?
- Do they have the credentials or certifications the program requires?
- If not fully trained yet, what is the timeline and plan for completion?



Note: "Fully trained" means completing the program's required training, not just general dyslexia training. Each program has specific training requirements.



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Evidence-Based Dyslexia Instruction

Components & Best Practices



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Two Brothers. Two Different Programs.

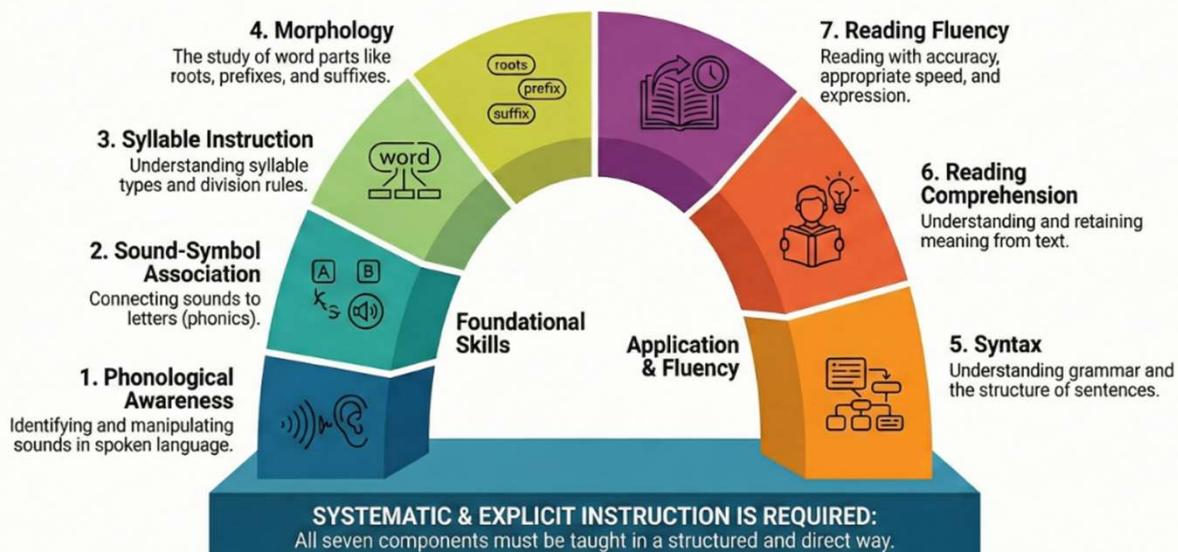
Play K

SCOTTISH RITE

FOR CHILDREN

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The 7 Core Components of Reading Instruction



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Explicit and Direct:

Teacher clearly models and directly teaches concepts; no guessing or discovery learning

Systematic and Sequential

Skills progress in order from simple to complex; build on previously mastered skills

Multi-modal

Engages visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile pathways simultaneously

Diagnostic and Prescriptive

Progress monitoring and assessment informs individualized instruction based on students needs

Synthetic and Analytic

Part to whole (blending) and whole to parts (segmenting)



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TEA Resource List of Evidence-Based Dyslexia Programs		
Name of Program	Program Information	Grade Levels
Alphabetic Phonics 8th Edition	Alphabetic Phonics LEPS Learning Store	K-12
Amplio Reading Intervention-Esperanza 8th Edition, digitized for Amplio Reading Intervention	https://ampliolearning.com/products/reading-intervention/	1-2
Amplio Reading Intervention-MTA 2010 MTS Publications digitized for Amplio Reading Intervention	https://ampliolearning.com/products/reading-intervention/	K-12
Basic Language Skills (2019)	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7000000/	1-12
Bridges: A Dyslexia Intervention Connecting Teacher, Avatar, and Student 1st Edition	https://scottshiteforchildren.org/research-and-education/education/dyslexia-educator-center/	Age 7 years or older
Build: A K-1 Early Reading Intervention 1st Edition	https://scottshiteforchildren.org/research-and-education/education/dyslexia-educator-center/	K-1
Esperanza 8th Edition, digitized for Amplio Reading Intervention	www.valleyspeech.org	1-2
Jet: A Fast-Paced Reading Intervention 1st Edition	https://scottshiteforchildren.org/research-and-education/education/dyslexia-educator-center/	Ages 14 and older
Multisensory Teaching Approach to Reading and Spelling 2nd edition	www.mtspublications.com	K-12
Reading by Design - An Individualized Literacy Intervention 1st Edition (minor revisions in 2020)	https://www.readbydesign.net/services/literacy-and-language-2/rd/	K-12
Sequential English Education (SEE) Program 5th Edition, 2023	https://www.shelton.org/shelton-teacher-training/mste-courses/see/	Age 5 to adult
Take Flight: A Comprehensive Intervention for Students with Dyslexia	https://scottshiteforchildren.org/research-and-education/education/dyslexia-educator-center/	1-12
Wilson Reading System System Steps 1-6 4th Edition: 2018; Wilson Reading System Steps 7-12 4th Edition: 2021	Wilson Language Training	2-12
Working with English Language Learners (WELLS) 3rd Edition	www.valleyspeech.org	Grade 1 - dual language or immersion programs; Grade 2 - bilingual transitional education program

TEA Resource List of Evidence-Based Dyslexia Programs



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Provider of Dyslexia Instruction (PDI) Requirements

Required Training

- Fully trained in the LEA's evidence-based dyslexia program
- Able to use individualized, intensive, multimodal; phonetic methods
- Competent in writing and spelling components

Best Practice Credentials

- Licensed Dyslexia Therapist (LDT)
- Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT)

NOTE: Paraprofessionals cannot be the primary PDI



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What is a CALT?

Qualifications:

- ✓ 200+ instructional hours in multisensory structured language education
- ✓ 700+ clinical/teaching practicum hours
- ✓ CALT-QI supervision throughout training
- ✓ Master's degree required
- ✓ ALTA competency exam at therapy level
- ✓ IMSLEC-accredited program

CALTs and LDTs are the highest-qualified professionals for dyslexia intervention

What This Means for Students:



- ✓ Diagnostic precision: Pinpoints exact skill gaps for individualized instruction
- ✓ Multisensory engagement: Uses visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile pathways
- ✓ Structured progression: Systematic building from simple to complex
- ✓ Data-driven adjustment: Daily monitoring and responsive teaching
- ✓ Reading success: Students typically gain 1.5-2+ years growth per intervention year
- ✓ Restored confidence: "I can read" replaces "I'm dumb"



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Strategic Alignment - ESF & RDA with Student-Centered Focus

Our CALT program would directly support 3 critical levers:



Lever 1: Strong School Leadership & Planning

CALTs serve as specialized instructional leaders for dyslexia intervention
Student Impact: Consistent, high-quality programs vs. varied, inconsistent approaches



Lever 2: Strategic Staffing

Creates pipeline of qualified educators; improves retention through professional investment
Student Impact: Continuity of expert instruction; students don't lose progress when teachers leave



Lever 5: Effective Instruction

Data-driven, diagnostic-prescriptive teaching aligned to IEP goals
Student Impact: Every lesson targets exact needs; daily progress monitoring ensures growth



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Instructional Delivery & Progress Monitoring

Recommended Frequency

(Dependent on program specific fidelity of implementation)

- 4-5 times a week
- 45-60 min sessions
- Small group (1:1 to 1:5 ratio)

Program duration

Students typically need 2-3 years of intensive instruction.



Progress Monitoring

- Regular assessment of skills acquisition
- Data-driven instructional adjustments
- Required reporting to parents



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Key Takeaways

- Dyslexia is a neurobiological learning disability affecting 15-20% of the population, characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition
- Early identification and intervention are critical for success. Screening should begin in kindergarten and continue through grade 2
- HB 3928 and the Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2024 clarify that dyslexia is a specific learning disability requiring specialized expertise on evaluation teams
- Effective dyslexia instruction must include all seven components delivered through explicit, systematic, multimodal, diagnostic, and synthetic/analytic methods
- Qualified instructors, evidence-based programs, and appropriate accommodations are essential for student success.



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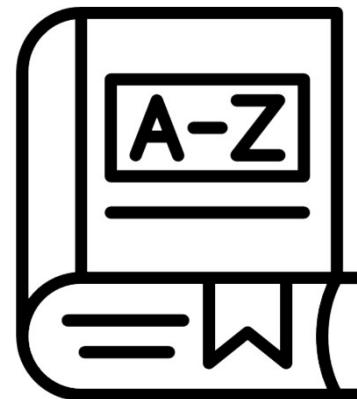
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Essential Resources

Texas Education Agency
 Dyslexia Handbook 2024 Update
 TEA Resource List of Evidence-Based Programs
 HB 3 Dyslexia Allotment Spending Guidance

National Organization
 International Dyslexia Association
 Understood.org
 Learning Disabilities Association of America

Professional Development
 TEA Learn
 Academic Language Therapy Association
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Questions



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THANK YOU

for your commitment to supporting
students with dyslexia.

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