## Early Detection: Dyslexia in Early Childhood

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (International Dyslexia Association, 2002)

### Language Skills

Dyslexia is a language-based disorder. Young children showing early signs of dyslexia may demonstrate language deficits such as difficulty processing, recalling, and storing auditory information. These children may also talk later than other children their age and may have difficulty pronouncing words.

### Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness, according to Liben and Liben (2019), includes “the universe of sounds, mostly sounds intentionally made by humans” (p. 30). This includes whole words, syllables, and individual sounds. Children showing early signs of dyslexia may have difficulty predicting rhyming patterns, identifying syllables, and may also show little interest in rhymes or engaging in word games.

### Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is focused on phonemes, the smallest unit of sound in words. Children showing early signs of dyslexia may lack the ability to notice letter or sound patterns across words. They might also have difficulty learning the alphabet, letters, or colors.

### Alphabetic Principle

Young children showing early signs of dyslexia may struggle with learning the alphabet, letters, and basic colors. They may also show little interest in books, including being read to.

A sample screening sequence for young children (prior to Kindergarten) might include:

- Rhyming: “Which word rhymes with ...?” “Which word does not rhyme with ...?”
- Syllable Blending: “What is this word /cl /at/?”
- Sentence Segmentation: “How many words do you hear in this sentence?”
- Syllable Segmentation: “Count the syllables in this word.”

### Resources


www.nasponline.org