

Red Flags For Teachers

Notes & Excerpts from the Presentation by Laura Rogan, from *Wired For Reading Teacher Manual*, and from the pdf. In Resources on the wiredforreading.com website

Definition of Dyslexia:

(from Lyon 2003)

- Specific learning disability
- Neurobiological in origin
- Characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition
- Characterized by poor spelling and decoding abilities
- Difficulties that typically result from a deficit in the phonological processing of language
- Often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction
- As a result of the phonological processing difficulties, may have problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experiences which can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge

Children may have difficulty in one or more of the following areas:

1. Phonological Processing

- a. phonological awareness – rhyming, syllables, and onsets & rimes
- b. phoneme awareness – hearing distinct individual sounds and being able to segment them
- c. phonological memory – ability to hold information given or read orally in short term memory

2. Orthographic Processing – ability to form, remember, and recall letters, letters in words, and words

3. Rapid Automatic Naming – ability to quickly name pictures of well-known objects and symbols

Red Flags for Phonological Processing:

Listen for errors in phonological awareness (Rhyming, Alliteration, Syllable Counting):

- Can they rhyme? Most children recognize rhymes (fish/dish) by 3 yrs. old
- Can they use alliteration? Most 3 yrs. olds can recognize that some words all start with the same sound (fish, fat, farm)
- Can they count syllables? 50% of all 4 yr. olds, and 90% of all 5 yr. olds can count syllables
- Are they aware of the words' onsets (sounds before the vowel) and the rimes (sounds from the vowel sounds on). Ex: *plop* onset = /pl/ rime = /op/

Listen for phoneme awareness:

- Can they identify the distinct, individual sounds (phonemes) in a word, and segment it by phoneme? Ex: *plop* = 4 phonemes, *thin* = 3 phonemes (70% of all 6 yr. olds can count phonemes).
- Hear and match initial consonant sounds? Ex: church and children have same onset (usually be age 6)
- Blend 2 – 3 phonemes? Ex: /c/-/a/-/t/ blends to cat (a skill usually reached by age 7)

- Segment 3 – 4 phonemes? Ex: *help* = /h/-/e/-/l/-/p/ (usually age 7 skill)
- Delete phonemes Ex: take away /l/ from *flat* and you get *fat* (usually age 7 skill)
- Identify rhyming words? Ex: *fin, skin, thin*
- Divide words into onset and rime? Ex: /sk/ - /in/

Children with phonological processing issues will have difficulty or not be able to do the above tasks within the expected time frame. A **simple measurement** to assess phonological weakness is to ask the student to say a word, and then repeat the word leaving out one sound Ex: “Say *clap* without the /l/. Although this is an auditory-articulatory task, according to research (Goswami, 1997) students with weakness in this area will exhibit predictable errors while interacting with print such as:

- Leaving sounds out
- Adding in sounds
- Reversing the order of sounds within words and syllables

Listen and observe for phonological memory:

- Can they learn temporal sequences? Ex: alphabet, days of the week, months of the year learned by the end of kindergarten/first grade?
- Do they have trouble pronouncing, learning and remembering new words (even though they remember the meaning)?
- Can they follow multi-step directions?
- Sequence syllables and sounds within words?
- Learn rote auditory information? Ex: math facts, phone number
- Do they have persistent difficulty with sequencing?

Red Flags for Orthographic Coding Errors:

- Doesn’t look at print, prefers pictures
- Do they have trouble learning the motor plans for letters (how to make them)?
- Do they have difficulty recognizing letters/numbers?
- Do they have incorrect pencil grip?
- Is it difficult for them to memorize “unfair” spelling words Ex: *would* - even with repeated, focused instruction?
- Do they have trouble spelling/reading and getting meaning of homophones? Ex: *made/maid*?
- Do they spell phonetically (especially in older grades)?
- Do they spell the same word several ways (even if the word is provided)?

(Note: some children with only orthographic challenges read much better than they spell, and benefit from explicit instruction on how to form, retain and recall mental images of print).

Red Flags for Rapid Automatic Naming Errors:

- Do they have poor reading fluency?
- Do they have difficulty keeping up with volume of reading and writing work?
- Misreads or leaves out grammar words (of, from, she, this) and drops or changes suffixes from words and yet reads complex words like *hippopotamus*?
- (Pre-K and Kindergarten) Do they know letter names, but cannot recall them quickly?
- (Pre-K and Kindergarten) Do they have difficulty naming familiar objects and known colors?