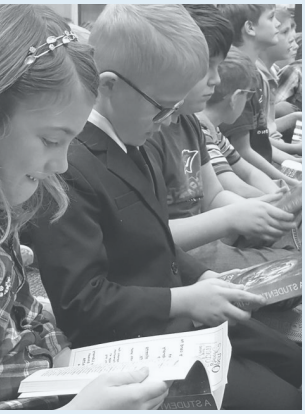


The Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update:

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR FAMILIES TO UNDERSTAND

The State's Dyslexia Handbook was recently updated. This document reviews some of the major changes to help families understand what to expect if they have a child with dyslexia, suspect their child may have dyslexia, or have a student in a grade where dyslexia screening happens for all students.

EVALUATION UPDATE:

One change to the handbook is with the process schools must follow for identifying dyslexia or dysgraphia. Now, anytime the school suspects a student has dyslexia or dysgraphia and needs services, they must ask for parent consent to conduct a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) under IDEA.

This change makes sure that schools are meeting their requirement under federal law to find and evaluate students who have or are suspected of having a disability and needing special education services. **This requirement is called Child Find**. Evaluations through the IDEA process makes sure that students who are eligible for special education services are identified and provided the supports they need.

WHAT DOES THIS CHANGE MEAN?

FOR STUDENTS ALREADY IDENTIFIED WITH DYSLEXIA?

If your child is not receiving special education services, but is identified with dyslexia and receiving intervention services from the school, your child's progress should be carefully monitored, and you should get regular updates. If your child is making good progress and you agree with the current supports and services, your child can continue with the same instruction, even if they are not receiving special education. However, if you are concerned about progress and/or suspect that your child may need special education services, you have the right to request an evaluation under the IDEA. If the school suspects your child may need special education services, they must refer your child for an evaluation. Based on the evaluation, you and the school may decide during an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting that your child needs special education services.

If you or the school are concerned about your child's progress, a referral for a special education evaluation may be necessary.

Texas Education Agency

The Dyslexia Handbook 2021 Update: IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR FAMILIES TO UNDERSTAND

FOR STUDENTS SUSPECTED OF HAVING DYSLEXIA?

If your school suspects that your child has dyslexia or dysgraphia and needs services, the school must ask for your consent to conduct an FIIE.

- You will be given a written notice explaining the evaluation and why the school is recommending doing one. The notice will be explained to you, and you will have the choice to agree or disagree with conducting the evaluation. You will also receive a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards, a document that reviews your rights regarding special education evaluations and services.
- An FIIE is also called a special education evaluation but consenting to the evaluation **does not mean** that you consent to special education services. Once the evaluation is complete, if your child is eligible, you must agree to special education services before they can be provided.
- For more information regarding parents' rights in special education, click here.

Consenting to an evaluation does not mean that you consent to special education services.

If you suspect your child has dyslexia or any other learning disability, send a written request for a special education evaluation to the school principal or district special education director.

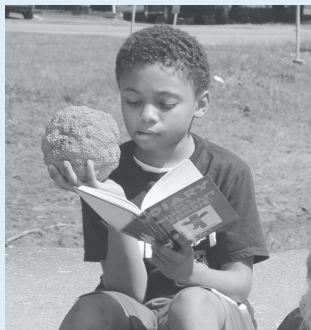
- Clearly state that you want a full individual evaluation under the IDEA.
- Explain your specific concerns such as a lack of reading progress and suspicion of dyslexia.
- The school must respond to your written request within 15 school days, by either providing you notice that it proposes to conduct the evaluation, along with an opportunity for you to sign consent, or providing notice as to why it is refusing to do the evaluation. A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards is also provided with the response.

SCREENING UPDATE:

The dyslexia handbook 2021 update also made some changes to the specific reading skills that must be part of screening for dyslexia.

State law requires that all kindergarten and first grade students are screened for dyslexia.

- Kindergarten students must be screened for dyslexia at the end of the school year.
- First grade students must be screened for dyslexia by January 31.

The screener helps identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia. If you have a child in kindergarten or first grade, you should expect them to be screened for dyslexia. Ask your child's teacher about the results if they were not provided to you.

To learn more about the specific screening requirements please see page 13 of the Dyslexia Handbook.