



DDCA Summary of California Dyslexia Guidelines

On August 14, 2017, the California Department of Education issued California Dyslexia Guidelines as required under Assembly Bill 1369. The guidelines were revised to reflect important corrections to “Chapter 10: Special Education and 504 Plans” on September 14, 2017. Decoding Dyslexia CA (DDCA) is providing the following summary of this 119-page document.

For a complete copy of the guidelines, go to www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/dyslexia.asp.

1. NEUROSCIENCE:

- Dyslexia is a real neurological condition.
- Changes to brain function can occur in response to intervention, especially in young children.
- Neuroscience and Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) do not support the use of severe discrepancy in identifying dyslexia.

2. EARLY IDENTIFICATION / UNIVERSAL SCREENING:

- Universal screening of all students beginning in kindergarten for students "at risk" for dyslexia.
- Implementing effective reading programs as early as kindergarten can help close the achievement gap.

3. ASSESSMENTS:

- Must assess phonological processing skills (CA Ed Code 56334).
- Assess students early whose academic struggles indicate they may have dyslexia, rather than wait until they fall far behind their peers.
- Must not require presence of a severe discrepancy in determining specific learning disability for special education eligibility.
- Use the terms dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations and IEP documents.
- There is no single factor or symptom of dyslexia.
- Not all people with dyslexia have below average phonological processing skills. Orthographic processing skills should be considered, too.
- If parent has dyslexia, child is 4 times more at risk.
- Poor spelling is a risk indicator.
- Response to Intervention (RTI) should not be used to delay or deny a timely evaluation to determine special education eligibility.
- Dyslexia occurs equally among people from different cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic status.
- High co-occurrence with ADHD, speech-language impairment, dysgraphia and dyscalculia.
- Dyslexia is not a visual processing issue. Students with high IQ who are reading lower than their cognitive capacity (even though their reading skills are in the average range) can have dyslexia.

4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL):

- Need to do more to help identify ELL's who might have dyslexia, as they make up a large percentage of students.
- Assess in both native language and English (when possible).

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5. SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES:

- Students with dyslexia experience anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions 2-5 times more than their peers.
- Students with dyslexia who suffer from low self-esteem respond less to intervention.
- Students with dyslexia may present as unmotivated, lazy, resistant or defiant when these behaviors are actually a result of low self-concept and repeated failure.

6. STRUCTURED LITERACY APPROACHES:

- Educational services for students with dyslexia should be evidence-based, multisensory, direct, explicit, structured, and sequential.
- Structured Literacy benefits all students, not just students with dyslexia.
- Schools and preservice programs should train teachers in Structured Literacy (as defined by the International Dyslexia Association) and provide a supervised Structured Literacy practicum.
- Dyslexic students must be served in general education classroom even if they are not found eligible for special education.

7. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) & ACCOMMODATIONS:

- AT and Accommodations help eliminate barriers to learning.
- IEP teams are required to consider the use of AT devices.
- It is never too early to introduce AT.
- AT training for student, parents and school personnel is critical.
- Section 504 Plans can include services in addition to accommodations.
- Students with dyslexia who are unable to use traditional print materials must be provided accessible educational materials (i.e. audiobooks) at the same time that their peers receive print materials.



For more information on dyslexia, please refer to the You Asked! library on the DDCA website.

Decoding Dyslexia CA is a grassroots movement driven by California families, educators, and professionals concerned with the limited access to educational interventions for dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities within our public schools. We aim to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children and inform policymakers on best practices to identify, remediate and support students with dyslexia in CA public schools.

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