Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that, most often, makes it difficult for individuals to read. Individuals with dyslexia have an inefficient ability to sort out, analyze, and sequence sounds heard in spoken language. Students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities are as intelligent as others, and often have great strengths – but they learn differently. No two individuals with dyslexia will have exactly the same symptoms, but many students with dyslexia will experience difficulty with some of the following:

For preschool and elementary school children signs of dyslexia include difficulty with:
- Learning to talk
- Pronouncing longer words
- Rhyming
- Learning the alphabet sequence, days of the week, colors, shapes and numbers
- Learning letter names and sounds
- Learning to read and write his or her name
- Learning to identify syllables (cow-boy in cowboy) and speech sounds (phonemes: b-a-t in bat) in words
- Sounding out simple words
- Reading and spelling words with the correct letter sequence ("top" versus "pot")
- Handwriting and fine-motor coordination

Adolescents, teenagers, and adults might have the signs of dyslexia listed above in addition to the difficulties listed below:
- Reading and spelling far below grade level
- Avoiding reading and writing
- Working slowly on reading and writing assignments and tests
- Struggling with a foreign language
- Struggling with reading fluency and comprehension
- Struggling with organizing and expanding ideas in written expression
- Forgetting detailed information
Parent Encouragement and Support

- **Emphasize your child’s strengths and interests.** Children and young adults with dyslexia who see their peers reading and making progress may feel "dumb" because it's difficult to keep up. Their self-esteem may take a beating. Parents can bolster their child’s sense of self by making sure family life includes activities and conversations that play to their young person’s talents, interests, and traits. Parents know better than anybody all of the wonderful traits a young person possesses - warmth, humor, caring, idealism, loyalty, passion.

- **Maintain strong home-school communication.** As partners, parents and educators can increase the likelihood of reading success for students with dyslexia. By offering consistent instruction at home and in the classroom, parents and educators reinforce students’ understanding of reading strategies that build their competence and confidence.

- **Read to your child and have your child read to you.** These sessions will increase your child’s vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

- **Maximize the use of assistive technology and digital devices** that advance your child’s reading competence and enjoyment. Emerging iPads, eBook Readers and Smart Phones provide opportunities for capturing and scanning information and converting it to voice and sound file formats as well as to text.

- **Request electronic formats for classroom notes and study materials.** These formats will allow your child to alter the materials to match his learning needs.

- **As your child gets older, encourage her to use age-appropriate elements of the following reading strategies:**
  
  - **Before reading:** read the title or headings, look at pictures, charts, or graphs, and think of questions that you might answer as you read.
  - **During reading:** relate the reading to his own experiences, highlight key points, outline the main ideas, and restate details in your own words.
  - **After reading:** review any highlighted text, take notes, and determine how the information is related to prior knowledge.
  - **Ask the following questions throughout the process:** What do I see/picture in my head? What might happen next? How is this like my life? What’s going through my mind? What do I wonder about? What’s happened so far?

- **Remind your child that he is smart – and will be a success in life.** Young people are resilient when the important adults in their lives believe in them unconditionally, provide appropriate supports, encourage independence, and hold them to high expectations.
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