Diagnosed with Dyslexia?

Your child’s right to learn how to read.
What We’ll Cover Today

I. Law Basics
II. New Jersey Dyslexia Laws
III. New Jersey Dyslexia Handbook
IV. What Parents Need To Know
I. Law basics
Federal laws impacting students with disabilities

There are two pathways through which students may qualify to receive special education

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
• The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) is a **United States federal law** that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, **special education**, and related services to children with disabilities.

• It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 21.
The IDEA’s Mandate:

- Entitles all children who meet the definition of “a child with a disability” to receive:
  - A **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**
  - In the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

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Who qualifies under IDEA?

Children between the ages of 3 and 21, who meet the eligibility criteria in one of thirteen qualifying disabilities and who require special education services because of the disability can qualify for services under IDEA.
13 disability categories under IDEA

- Autism
- Deafness disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Multiple disabilities
- Other health impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment (including blindness)

- Deaf-blindness
- Emotional
- Intellectual disability
- Orthopedic impairment
- Specific learning disability

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Eligibility under IDEA

To be eligible, a student must have a disability that *adversely affects* her or his educational performance and must need special education and related services in order to receive an appropriate education.
"Child Find." Schools are obligated to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who need special education and related services. Parents are asked if the school can evaluate their child. Or —

Parents may also contact the child's teacher or other school professional to ask that their child be evaluated. This request should be in writing. Parental consent is needed before the child may be evaluated. Evaluation needs to be completed within a reasonable time after the parent gives consent.
Do you need to fail first?

- According to IDEA, states must make a free appropriate public education available to “any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even if the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade and is advancing from grade to grade.”

[34 CFR §300.101(c)(1)]
Section 504

- A civil rights statute which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities
- It is an anti-discrimination law
- It is not an education law
- Programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance fall under Section 504
- Schools are required to provide a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE)
Disability defined under section 504

*Under Section 504 there is no list of “approved” disabling conditions. A person with a disability is someone who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities OR
2. Have a record of such an impairment OR
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment
Section 504

- It is about leveling the playing field
- Accessibility to regular education programs
- Its focus is on preventing discrimination
- It is about accommodations
Consider IDEA

Adverse affect on educational performance?

Yes → IDEA Eligible

IEP Developed

Related Services

Placement Options

No → Not Eligible

Consider 504

Disability substantially limits one or more major life activities

Not Eligible

504 Protected

Reasonable Accommodations

FAPE

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II. New Jersey Dyslexia Laws
Dyslexia Laws

- Dyslexia Definition
- Professional Development
- Dyslexia Screening
Dyslexia Defined

- Effective immediately 2013-2014 school year
- Incorporated the International Dyslexia Association’s definition of dyslexia into the New Jersey Administrative Code
Professional Development (PD)

• Starting 2013-2014 School Year
• 2 hours of PD annually
• Available to general education, special education, basic skills, English as a second language (ESL), instructional support staff, administrators, supervisors, Child Study Team members, reading specialists, Learning disabilities teacher consultants (LDTC) and Speech and Language specialists.
• This applies to K-3
• Board of Education can expand the opportunity to other staff members
Dyslexia Screening

Who gets screened?

- A student exhibiting:
  - 1 or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities
    - “No later than the student’s completion of the 1st semester of the second grade”
Who conducts the screening?

A teacher or other teaching staff member “properly trained in the screening process for dyslexia and other reading disabilities.”
What happens after screening?

If student possesses 1 or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities:

1. Student gets a comprehensive assessment for the learning disorder
2. If results show a “diagnosis of dyslexia or other reading disability”, then the school “shall provide appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies to the student, including intense instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension.”
III. New Jersey Dyslexia Handbook
NJ Dyslexia Handbook

- [https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/dyslexia/NJDyslexiaHandbook.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/dyslexia/NJDyslexiaHandbook.pdf)
- Save it on your computer
- Print it in color
- Bring it with you to your IEP meeting
- Exploring the New Jersey Dyslexia Handbook-4 part recorded webinar series:
  [https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/dyslexia/handbook.shtml](https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/dyslexia/handbook.shtml)

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IV. What Parents Need to Know
FOCUS ON THE BIG PICTURE

First Step: Identify needs
Second Step: Write measurable annual goals
Third Step: Describe how progress towards the annual goals will be measured
Fourth Step: Determine the schedule for reporting progress to the parent
Fifth Step: Determine programming and placement

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Decoding  Encoding  Reading Comprehension  Fluency  Vocabulary

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Progress Monitoring

- **Baseline**
  - Provides you with a starting point

- **Annual Goal**
  - Goal set for the year

- **Data Collection**
  - Shows the student’s performance over time
As a parent ...

➢ You need to collect your own data and observations throughout the year
➢ Build allies within the school
➢ Educate yourself about your child’s disability
➢ Educate yourself about what his/her reading difficulties are. “What does it look like”
➢ Know what Structured Literacy Program is being used in your district

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Be informed...

- Knowledge about your rights, your child’s disability, and how we remediate
- Network with other parents, educators, specialists
- Learn from other students who are dyslexic
- Keep up to date on technology for classroom and home use
Be informed…

➢ Watch for the warning signs
➢ Look for the indicators of dyslexia
➢ Video tape your child reading
➢ Take pictures of your child’s writing
➢ Take note of their emotions
➢ Take note of how they socialize
➢ Know your child’s strengths and weaknesses

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Be engaged...

- Be aware of what programs are at your school
- Get to know the teachers
- Get to know what your child is learning
- Check on homework
- Ask questions
- Volunteer in your school
Summary...

1. Good evaluation—identify the needs
2. Measurable annual goals and objectives
3. Progress Monitoring
4. Structured Literacy instruction
5. Experienced Teachers
6. Involved Parents
7. Engaged Students
Everyone at the table has a voice
➢ We all must be “child” focused
➢ Everyone’s opinions must be heard
➢ You will not always agree, but you will need to come to an agreement that works for both sides
➢ “Develop a language of persuasion rather than a language of positional battle”

(Parenting A Struggling Reader, pg. 53 by Susan Hall and Louisa Moats)
QUESTIONS?
Thank you

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