

Clues to Dyslexia in Young Adults and Adults

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The specific signs of dyslexia, both weaknesses and strengths, in any one individual will vary according to the age and educational level of that person. The five-year-old who can't quite learn his letters becomes the six-year-old who can't match sounds to letters and the fourteen-year-old who dreads reading out loud and the twenty-four-year-old who reads excruciatingly slowly. The threads persist throughout a person's life.

The following are some clues to dyslexia in young adults and adults.

Problems in speaking

- Persistence of earlier oral language difficulties
- The mispronunciation of the names of people and places, and tripping over parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places and the confusion of names that sound alike
- A struggle to retrieve words: "It was on the tip of my tongue"
- Lack of glibness, especially if put on the spot
- Spoken vocabulary that is smaller than listening vocabulary and hesitation to say aloud words that might be mispronounced

Problems in reading

- A childhood history of reading and spelling difficulties
- Word reading becomes more accurate over time but continues to require great effort
- Lack of fluency
- Embarrassment caused by oral reading: the avoidance of Bible study groups, reading at Passover seders, or delivering a written speech
- Trouble reading and pronouncing uncommon, strange, or unique words such as people's names, street or location names, food dishes on a menu (often resorting to asking the waiter what the special of the day is or saying, "I'll have what he's having," to avoid the embarrassment of not being able to read the menu)
- Persistent reading problems
- The substitution of made-up words during reading for words that cannot be pronounced – for example, *metropolitan* becomes *mitan* – and a failure to recognize the word *metropolitan* when it is seen again or heard in a lecture the next day
- Extreme fatigue from reading
- Slow reading of most materials: books, manuals, subtitles in foreign films
- Penalized by multiple-choice tests
- Unusually long hours spent reading school or work-related materials
- Frequent sacrifice of social life for studying
- A preference for books with figures, charts or graphics
- A preference for books with fewer words per page or with lots of white showing on a page
- Disinclination to read for pleasure
- Spelling that remains disastrous and a preference for less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell
- Particularly poor performance on rote clerical tasks