



Dyslexia and Speech Therapy

My child is dyslexic, but she talks just fine. Why does she need speech therapy?

This is a common question that parents have when speech therapy is recommended for their child after a dyslexia diagnosis. We must first understand dyslexia and how it affects speech. Dyslexia is a learning disorder and affects areas of the brain that process speech. It results in difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and how these sounds relate to letters and words (decoding). Children with dyslexia have normal intelligence and usually normal vision.

Red Flags for Dyslexia

Toddler

- late talking
- learning new words slowly
- problems forming words correctly such as reversing sounds in words or confusing words that sound alike
- problems remembering or naming letters, numbers and colors
- difficulty learning nursery rhymes or playing rhyming games

School Age Children (*warning signs may become more apparent*)

- reading well below expected level for age
- difficulty processing or and understanding what he/she hears
- difficulty with word finding
- problems remembering sequence of things
- difficulty with similarities and differences in letters and words
- inability to sound out words
- difficulty spelling
- reading/writing tasks take a long time
- avoids activities that involve reading

Role of the Speech/Language Therapist

It is the position of the American Speech/Language Hearing Association (ASHA) that SLPs play a critical and direct role in the development of literacy for children and adolescents with communication disorders. SLPs' knowledge of normal and disordered language acquisition prepare them to help address delays in reading and writing.

SLPs are specially trained to address the following areas of speech/language development. Children with dyslexia often times have difficulty within these areas:

- phonological awareness
- decoding
- word recognition
- word automaticity
- reading fluency
- reading comprehension
- processing speed
- spelling
- writing
- rapid naming
- auditory comprehension
- verbal expressive language
- working memory

Next Steps

If you feel your child may have any of the warning signs, a speech/language evaluation is warranted. Speech/Language Pathologists (SLPs) will evaluate all language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing and create a therapy plan to address those deficiencies.