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| Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education |  |
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| **Special Education** Specific Learning Disability: Dyslexia **Definitions**  The [International Dyslexia Association](https://dyslexiaida.org/) defines dyslexia in their comprehensive "[IDA Dyslexia Handbook: What Every Family Should Know](https://dyslexiaida.org/ida-dyslexia-handbook/)" as:  *"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."*  ***Special Education Definitions* Specific Learning Disability:**   * [Federal (IDEA)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/learndisability.html) * [State](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html?section=02)   **Legislation**  **Federal**  In September 2016, the United States Senate passed the [Senate Resolution 576](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-resolution/576) which "designates October 2016 as National Dyslexia Awareness Month, and calls on Congress, schools, and educational agencies to recognize that dyslexia has significant educational implications that must be addressed."  **State**  The Legislature approved [Chapter 272 of the Acts of 2018](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2018/Chapter272) on October 19, 2018. The new law requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in consultation with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to "issue guidelines to assist districts in developing screening procedures or protocols for students that demonstrate one or more potential indicators of a neurological learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia."  **Dyslexia-Related Resources:**  ***Please note that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not endorse the use of any product. The resources below are not intended to be comprehensive but rather serve as suggestions of tools that professionals may wish to consider using when working with students with dyslexia.***  **General Resources**   * The International Dyslexia Association offers over 20 different [Fact Sheets](https://dyslexiaida.org/fact-sheets/) on dyslexia, some of which you will see listed in other sections of this page. * The [Dyslexia Basics](https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-basics/) [(English)](https://app.box.com/s/3f36hzaedlnzq96v2xsz6a4uqxc7fkwt) [(Spanish)](https://app.box.com/s/zflmi0e4a6xjt7tey3i9pw8nrmezftaw)   **Screening**   * [National Center for Improving Literacy White Paper: Screening for Dyslexia](https://improvingliteracy.org/whitepaper/screening-dyslexia) * University of Michigan published [Clues to Dyslexia](http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/parents/learn-about-dyslexia/is-my-child-dyslexic/clues-to-dyslexia) to provide information to help identify the behaviors associated with dyslexia. * Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity [Signs of Dyslexia](http://dyslexia.yale.edu/dyslexia/signs-of-dyslexia/) provides a list of early childhood signs to help identify dyslexia in a child. * [The National Center on Intensive Intervention](https://intensiveintervention.org/) offers information about data-based interventions; both academic and behavioral. Information is also available about various [screening](https://charts.intensiveintervention.org/chart/academic-screening) tools. * The Connecticut State Department of Education published a list of [Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Language-Arts/Approved_Menu_of_Research_based_K3_Universal_Reading_Assessments_March_2017.pdf?la=en). * Fact Sheet from the International Dyslexia Association:   + [Universal Screening: K–2 Reading](https://dyslexiaida.org/?p=6034)   **Intervention**   * The Utah State Board of Education Report to the Education Interim Committee: [Interventions for Reading Difficulties Pilot Program Report](https://le.utah.gov/interim/2018/pdf/00004483.pdf) * [Systems for Student Success](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/) — The Massachusetts Systems for Student Success (SfSS) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. * [Quick Reference Guide: Specific Learning Disability Eligibility within a Tiered System of Support [Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/learning-disability.docx)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/learning-disability.docx) * [National Center on Intensive Intervention](https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention) — Learn how intensive intervention, through the data-based individualization (DBI) process, helps students with severe and persistent learning or behavioral needs. * The National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance offers a practice guide, [Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3). "This guide offers five specific recommendations to help educators identify struggling readers and implement evidence-based strategies to promote their reading achievement."   **IEP Related**   * Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [Dear Colleague Letter from October 2015](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf), emphasizes that, "there is nothing in the IDEA that would prohibit the use of the terms dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in IDEA evaluation, eligibility determinations, or IEP documents." * The Center for Parent Information and Resources provides guidance on [Evaluating Children for Disability](https://www.parentcenterhub.org/evaluation/) * Informational Flyer: [5 Questions Parents and Educators Can Ask to Start Conversations About Using Terms Like Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia](https://www.ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SLD-Conversations.D3.pdf) from the National Center for Learning Disabilities. * Fact Sheet from the International Dyslexia Association:   + [Assessment of Dyslexia](https://dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-assessment-what-is-it-and-how-can-it-help/)   **Accommodations & Assistive Technology:**   * DESE [Providing Accessible Instructional Materials](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/assistive/nimas.html) * DESE [Access to Learning Document [Download Word Document](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/assistive/AccessToLearning.docx)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/assistive/AccessToLearning.docx)will help you consider the need for assistive technology to assist a student in accessing the curriculum. * [Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia](https://dyslexiaida.org/accommodations-for-students-with-dyslexia/) Fact Sheet from the International Dyslexia Association * [Center for Parent Information and Resources offers](https://www.parentcenterhub.org/glance-accommodations-dyslexia/) an "At a Glance: Classroom Accommodations for Dyslexia" infographic in both English and Spanish. * [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)](http://aem.cast.org/) provides resources and technical assistance for educators, parents, students, publishers, and others interested in learning more about AEM and implementing AEM and the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). * Bright Solutions produced a 3-page handout on [Classroom Accommodations for Dyslexic Students](https://www.dys-add.com/resources/General/AccommodationsHandout.pdf) * The Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) produces a variety of guides for [Assistive Technology Considerations](http://www.wati.org/free-publications/assistive-technology-consideration-to-assessment/). * CAST has a vast amount of resources for using [Universal Design for Learning (UDL)](http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.W_VsaOhKhPY) in your teaching.   **Specially Designed Instruction**   * [Effective Reading Instruction](https://dyslexiaida.org/effective-reading-instruction/) ([English](https://app.box.com/s/hvjb2c4dctr2jrsrpmi6kqg9f4k1bjsl) | [Spanish](https://app.box.com/s/9mmxog9eeyc8pqvg5f1q72b372fcjpal)) from the International Dyslexia Association * [What is Structured Literacy?](https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/) Helpful infographics from the International Dyslexia Association * Essential components of reading instruction as identified by the [National Reading Panel](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supported/nrp).   **Social Emotional Needs**   * ["Socio-Emotional and Cognitive Resilience in Children with Reading Disabilities"](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352154616301218) is an article that explores the factors to target that build resilience and improve cognitive functioning, socio-emotional wellbeing, and academic success of children with reading disabilities. * [Effective instruction for persisting dyslexia in upper grades: Adding hope stories and computer coding to explicit literacy instruction (fee)](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-017-9647-5) * An article from LDOnline.org highlighting [Social and Emotional Problems Related to Dyslexia](http://www.ldonline.org/article/19296/) ranging from anxiety, anger, self-image, depression, and family problems. * From Understood.org, this article examines 5 social challenges kids with dyslexia may have: [5 Ways Dyslexia Can Affect Your Child's Social Life](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/dyslexia/ways-dyslexia-reading-disability-can-affect-childs-social-life-self-esteem)   **State Dyslexia Guidelines**   * Massachusetts — *In development for implementation in School Year 2019-2020* * The [Alabama Dyslexia Resource Guide](http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ari/Dyslexia/Dyslexia%20Resource%20Guide.pdf) includes 70+ pages of information and an Appendix with a list of potential screening tools. * California State Department of Education produced the "[California Dyslexia Guidelines](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/documents/cadyslexiaguidelines.pdf)" in 2017 which includes over 100 pages of resources and information specific to dyslexia in all educational settings. * The New Jersey Department of Education published [The New Jersey Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide to Early Literacy Development and Reading Struggles](https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/dyslexia/NJDyslexiaHandbook.pdf) in September 2017. * In July 2019, Oklahoma published the [Oklahoma Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide to Literacy Development and Reading Struggles](https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/Oklahoma%20Dyslexia%20Handbook.pdf). The purpose of the handbook is to provide guidance to educators, students, families, and community members about dyslexia, and the best practices for identification, intervention, and support for children with dyslexia.   **DESE Professional Development Opportunities:**   * [Office of Special Education Planning and Policy](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/training/pdseries.html) * [Massachusetts Tiered Systems of Support](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/prof-develop/)  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | | | Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education | [| [Close Window](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/dyslexia.html?printscreen=yes&) ] | |