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Part XXXV. Bulletin 1903—Louisiana Handbook for Students with Dyslexia

Chapter 1. General Provisions

§101. Definitions

Accommodation—any technique that alters the academic setting or environment but generally does not change the information or amount of information learned to enable a student to exhibit knowledge more accurately.

Assessment—the act or process of gathering data in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning through observation, testing, interviews, screening, and evaluation.

Developmental Auditory Imperception—difficulties in perceiving and using what is heard such that the student may have difficulty with auditory processing, auditory discrimination, and learning sound-symbol associations.

Dysgraphia—difficulty with producing written symbols, usually resulting in slow and poor quality handwriting.

Dyslexia—an unexpected difficulty in reading for an individual who has the intelligence to be a much better reader, most commonly caused by a difficulty in phonological processing, which affects the ability of an individual to speak, read, and spell, noting that phonological processing is the appreciation of the individual sounds of spoken and written language.

Dysphasia—severe difficulty with expressive and receptive oral language.

Evaluation—the in-depth process of review, examination, and interpretation of intervention efforts, test results, interviews, observations, and other assessment information relative to predetermined criteria.

Expressive Language—the act of conveying information through writing, speaking, or gesturing.

Fluency—the clear, easy, written or spoken expression of ideas.

Grapheme—a written or printed representation of a phoneme (e.g., t, ch, z).

IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 105-17), also referred to as the special education statute.

Linguistics—the science of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

Morphology—the study of words and how they are formed.

Phoneme—the smallest unit of sound capable of signaling semantic distinction or meaning (e.g./sh/, /i/, /p/).

Phoneme Manipulation—dropping, adding, or moving phonemes to create new words or detached syllables.

Phoneme Segmentation—the ability to separately articulate the sounds of a spoken word in order.

Phonemic Awareness—the awareness that spoken words or syllables can be divided into a sequence of phonemes, which pertains to the rule system and is a subcategory of phonological awareness.

Phonics—an approach to teaching reading and spelling that stresses symbol-sound relationships, especially in beginning reading instruction.

Phonological Awareness—an understanding that words are made up of individual speech sounds as distinct from word meaning and that those sounds can be manipulated.

Phonology—the study of the speech sounds of a language and the underlying rules of usage.

Receptive Language—the act of understanding information by listening, reading, or gesturing.

Related Disorders—disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperceptions, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

Screening—a brief examination, which determines the presence or absence of an important impediment to learning.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—federal law found at 29 U.S.C. Secs. 706(7), 794, 794a, 794b. "No otherwise qualified disabled individual...shall, solely by the reason of his/her handicap, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Semantics—the study of meaning in language.

Syntax—the study of how sentences are formed and of the grammatical rules that govern sentence formation.

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HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 47:722 (June 2021), repromulgated LR 47:1287 (September 2021).

§103. Local Education Agency (LEA) Responsibilities

A. LEAs shall employ school personnel to oversee student screening, assessment, and evaluation for determination of program eligibility.

B. LEAs shall implement programs for students with characteristics of dyslexia and other related disorders in accordance with state and federal requirements.

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§105. School Level Responsibilities

A. School leaders shall select a School Building Level Committee (SBLC) comprised of members knowledgeable of student data and assessment processes.

B. SBLC members shall include, but are not limited to:

1. a teacher of student identified for review,
2. at least two additional education professionals knowledgeable about the student data and history, as well as indicators of condition in the individual school setting.

C. School leaders shall appoint a chairperson of the committee who is tasked with data collection, maintenance of records, scheduling and planning meetings, monitoring progress, obtaining necessary consent, and disseminating information to the committee members, educators, and parents.

D. Professional development shall be provided about state and federal regulations regarding dyslexia, the characteristics of dyslexia, and the LEA policies for implementation of the assessment and program process.

E. Educator training shall include information necessary to implement specialized instructional interventions and strategies for students with characteristics of dyslexia.

F. An intervention plan shall be established for students identified as demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia according to assessment and program determinations.

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§107. School Building Level Committee (SBLC) Responsibilities

A. Request for SBLC review from a parent or educator shall initiate the preliminary gathering of data to assist in addressing the educational progress of a student who is consistently struggling or having difficulty attaining expected academic progress, despite receiving instruction in a high quality curriculum with the implementation of additional instructional intervention strategies within the framework of a multi-tiered system of support.

B. Data gathering and review may include, but is not limited to, the following information to establish a profile of the whole child:

1. student and family history, including relevant developmental, health, or home information;
2. speech and language information, including assessment of phonological awareness;
3. academic, cognitive, and behavior records;

4. teacher observations of aptitude, behavior, and concerns;

5. criterion referenced, norm referenced, and/or standardized test results;

6. interventions implemented;

7. formal and/or informal assessment and progress monitoring data;

8. samples of student work;

9. observations of student effort at home and/or school;

10. student academic and non-academic strengths and interests;

11. most recent vision and hearing screening results;

C. The SBLC will determine if relevant data indicates the need for further action that may include:

1. additional assessment;

2. continuation of specialized instructional interventions and progress monitoring;

3. development of a 504 Plan to provide classroom accommodations;

4. referral to pupil appraisal for evaluation to determine eligibility for special services as provided by IDEA;

5. return to regular classroom without further strategies or interventions.

D. The SBLC may repeat the review process should characteristics of dyslexia become evident or emerge at a later date.

E. Private evaluation results and documentation submitted by a parent or guardian must be reviewed by the SBLC.

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§109. Screening Requirements

A. In accordance with Bulletin 741: *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, all students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade shall be administered an early literacy screener within the first 30 days of the school year.

B. Students in kindergarten and fall semester of first grade shall be screened with an early literacy instrument to measure:

1. phonemic awareness,
2. letter naming fluency, and
3. letter sound recognition.

C. Students in spring semester of first grade through third grade shall be screened with an early literacy instrument to measure:

1. decoding skills for blending and reading real and nonsense words accurately; and
2. oral reading fluency rate and accuracy in connected text.

D. A score that indicates deficits shall result in additional screening to include:

1. Kindergarten and fall semester of first grade students:

- a. phonological awareness such as rhyming and syllable manipulation; and/or
- b. rapid automatic naming skills such as colors, objects, and numbers.

2. spring semester of first grade through third grade students

- a. phonological/phonemic awareness such as syllable manipulation, phoneme segmentation, or phoneme manipulation;
- b. rapid automatic naming skills such as colors, objects, letters, and/ or numbers;
- c. encoding skills using spontaneous spelling;
- d. oral and written language skills.

E. A student demonstrating deficits after additional screening is considered to have characteristics of dyslexia and shall be provided appropriate structured language and literacy interventions.

F. Screening is not limited to students in kindergarten through third grade and may be administered at any grade level if a student exhibits impediments to a successful school experience.

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§111. Multisensory Structured Language and Literacy Program Criteria

A. A multisensory structured language and literacy program shall consist of specific content components to include:

1. phonological awareness;
2. phoneme-grapheme association;
3. phonics;
4. syllable instruction;
5. linguistics;
6. language-based instruction that integrates all aspects of language and comprehension

- a. receptive language skills of listening and reading,
- b. oral expression in word selection and sequencing,
- c. written expression in spelling, mechanics, and coherence, and
- d. handwriting;

7. Meaning-based instruction provided in words and sentences to extract meaning in addition to teaching isolated letter-sound correspondence.

B. Instructional methodology for a multisensory structured language and literacy program must be:

1. Explicit. Literacy instruction requires direct teaching of concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction and does not assume students deduce concepts.

2. Systematic. Material is organized and taught in a way that is logical and fits the nature of language which refers to the way sounds combine to form words and words combine to form sentences to represent knowledge. The ways are determined by a system of rules.

3. Sequential. The learner moves step by step, in order, from simple, well-learned material to that which is more complex, as the student masters the necessary body of language skills.

4. Cumulative. Each step is incremental and based on the skills already learned.

5. Individualized. Teaching is planned to meet the differing needs of individual learners, but may be of similar scope and sequencing.

6. Diagnostic. Teachers must be adept at individualizing instruction (even within groups) based on careful and continuous assessment, both informal (e.g., observation) and formal (e.g., with standardized measures). Content must be mastered to the degree of automaticity needed to free attention and cognitive resources for comprehension and oral/written expression.

7. Automaticity of Performance. Fluent processing of information that requires little effort or attention as in sight word recognition. Adequate practice with decodable text is to be provided for mastery of skills and application of concepts.

8. Simultaneous Multisensory. Instructional approaches use a simultaneous combination of internal visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile learning pathways to achieve proficiency in language processing.

9. Synthetic to Analytic Phonics. A process of teaching letter sounds to create words.

a. Synthetic phonics first teaches letter sounds and then combines or blends the sounds to create words.

b. Analytic phonics uses prior knowledge of letters and the corresponding sounds to decode and form new words.

C. Program Implementation

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1. Multisensory structured language and literacy programs are to be routinely provided within the regular school day within the framework of multi-tiered systems of support in:

- a. regular classroom setting;
- b. separate classroom setting;
- c. individual or small group instruction;
- d. any additional accommodations that are developed by the SBLC; or
- e. any combination thereof.

D. Review of Student Progress

1. Progress monitoring data shall be maintained on students receiving instruction in a multisensory structured language and literacy program.

2. The SBLC shall conduct a periodic review of the data to determine the effectiveness of the program for the student.

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