

44 MYTHS ABOUT DYSLEXIA DEBUNKED

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It is important to be aware of some of the popular misconceptions and myths surrounding dyslexia and language-based learning disability. We have highlighted some of the more common myths and provided the alternative understanding.

9 **Myth: Dyslexia can be accurately diagnosed by an educational psychologist or a 'specialist dyslexia teacher' by using special tests.**

Fact: It is often difficult to get a diagnosis for dyslexia because it is almost impossible to scientifically differentiate it from other learning disabilities, although the warning signs of dyslexia should be monitored and recorded carefully. Often, these types of specialists will use phrases in a written report such as "child has a specific weakness in phonological development" instead of saying "child has dyslexia". Don't give up hope, though! Dyslexia can be recognised and early intervention can help minimise its negative effects.



10 **Myth: Dyslexia is a medical diagnosis.**

Fact: Dyslexia is not characterised as a medical problem and is not tested by doctors because they don't have training on reading, writing and spelling testing. There is no pill or medication that can heal dyslexia, and nothing to do with dyslexia is covered by medical insurance because it is not a medical problem.

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11

Myth: Dyslexia is a specific brain weakness. It is a genetically-based, neurological difficulty with phoneme awareness and processing skills (the ability to detect and process the smallest perceptible speech sounds).

Fact: Phonemic awareness is only necessary when learning to read and spell and involves using an alphabet code. Research has shown that this aptitude is not acquired often in children. Usually, students need systematic phonics instruction in order to become proficient in reading and processing. Some people find this ability to learn how to recognise and manipulate phonemes more difficult than others due to normal genetic variation, rather than a brain weakness.

12

Myth: fMRI brain scan studies show that dyslexics' brains work differently from those of non-dyslexics.

Fact: When a brain scan is done of someone who struggles to read while he is trying to read, the scan will look different than one of someone who has no trouble with reading. When the first individual is then taught to read properly, his scan will look exactly the same as the second individual's.



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