

# How to Advocate for a Student with Dyslexia

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## What do you think of when you think of dyslexia?

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# dyslexia

dys + lex + ia

**dys** to lack, difficult, imperfect

**lex** words

**ia** abstract noun suffix

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### Dyslexia Myths and Misconceptions

- It is seeing letters and words backwards.
- "She is in the third grade. She has already outgrown her dyslexia."
- "Dyslexia is caused by a bump on the head."
- "Dyslexia isn't real."
- "Dyslexia is just an umbrella term."
- "We don't work with dyslexia."
- "Dyslexia isn't part of Special Education law."

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**Dyslexia is NOT:**


- Caused by poor eyesight or hearing problems
  - Vision Therapy or Color Overlays will not help.
  - Poor tracking, etc is usually the result of dyslexia, not the cause
- Seeing words or letters backwards
- A Developmental Disability (affecting IQ)
- Acquired Alexia, Aphasia or Anomia – these are caused by some type of head injury (ie: stroke)
- A degenerative disease
- Lack of educational opportunity
- The result of a lack of effort or laziness on the part of the student
- A medical condition

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### Let's Talk About Letter Reversals

Letter reversals are normal through the first grade, after that they become a red flag.

Letter reversals are the result of the brain trying to unlearn directionality.

b d p q

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**What is dyslexia:  
IDA Definition**

Dyslexia is a *specific learning disability* that is *neurological* in origin. It is characterized by *difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.*

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**Continued...**

These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the *phonological component* [and orthographic components] of language that is often *unexpected* in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

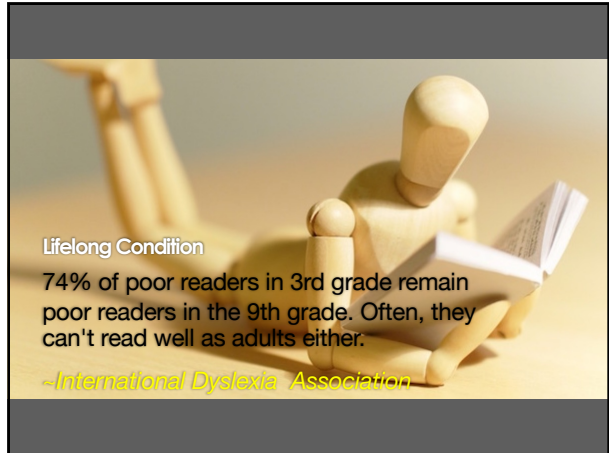
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**Continued...**

Secondary consequences may include problems in *reading comprehension* and reduced reading experience that can impede *growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.*

(Adopted by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).)

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**Lifelong Condition**

74% of poor readers in 3rd grade remain poor readers in the 9th grade. Often, they can't read well as adults either.

*-International Dyslexia Association*

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**How to Help.**



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**How to help**

Appropriate	identification through appropriate assessment and evidence gathering
Appropriate	accommodations put in place so the student can access grade level content and produce grade level content (while getting remediation)
Appropriate	remediation – Structured Literacy!
Trust	the student's intellect! They can learn with the correct instruction.

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### Accommodation vs Remediation

Accommodations **do not** replace remediation

Remediation **does not** replace accommodations

Some students may need accommodations throughout school even when they have had effective instruction

Dyslexia is remediated, but isn't gone

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### Appropriate Accommodations

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### Accommodations

Books in an audio format (Bookshare, Learning Ally)	Text-to-speech software	Speech-to-text software
Grammar checks	Note takers	Record lectures/meetings
Organizational structures (ie: calendars, graphic organizers, outlines, etc)	Oral & written directions	Highlighted text or notes

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What is Appropriate?

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### Quality Remediation - Structured Literacy

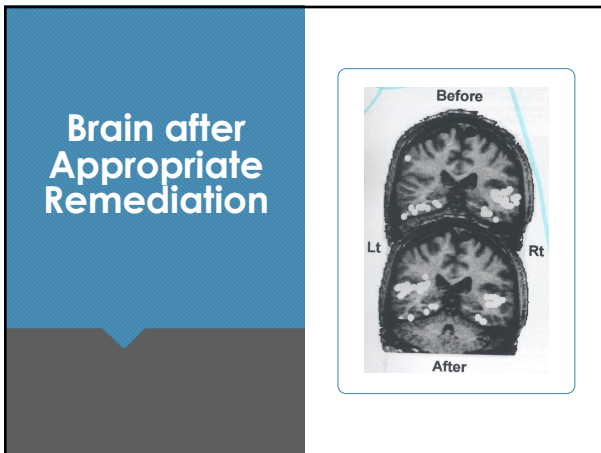
- We need to teach - Structure of English Language
  - Phonemic Awareness
  - Phonological Awareness
  - Phonics - Phoneme/Grapheme (Sound/Symbol) Relationships
  - Morphology - bases, roots, prefixes, suffixes
  - Syllables - Unit of oral or written language with one vowel pattern
  - Spelling Rules
  - Syntax - grammar, sentence variations, mechanics
  - Semantics - meaning based
- We need to use *Structured Literacy*, an approach that is:
  - Systematic
  - Explicit
  - Multisensory
  - Examples: Orton-Gillingham, Slingerland Based, or Structured Word Inquiry

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### The Brain After Proper Remediation

Typical readers      Dyslexic readers

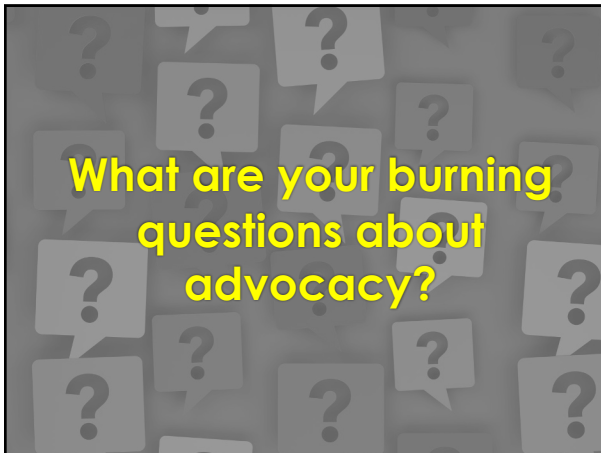
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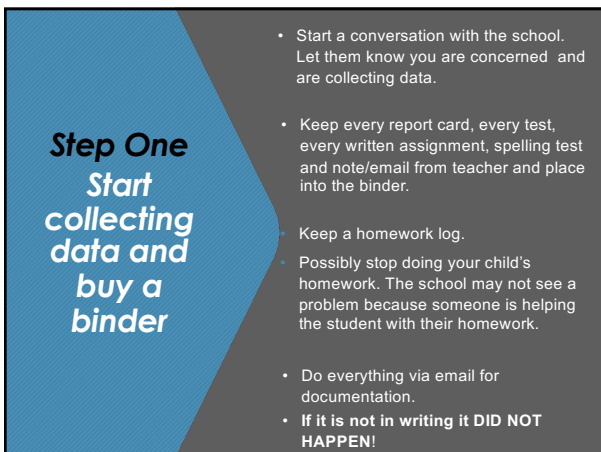
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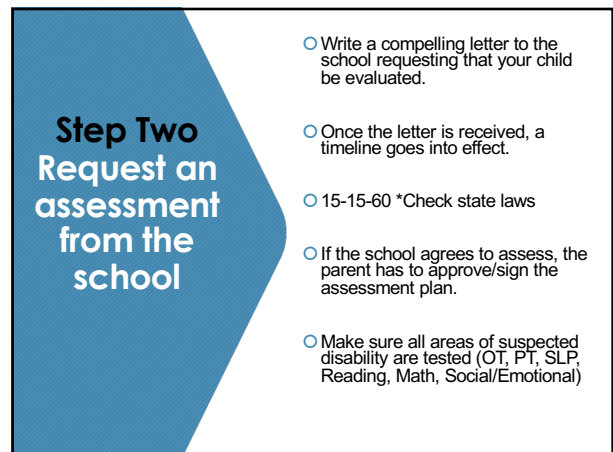
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### Denied Request for Initial Assessment

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If the school denies a request for assessment, the district must supply in writing justification for denial. This is called a Prior Written Notice (PWN).
- 

At this point you may consider an outside evaluation. "Screening" by a teacher or specialist is not considered a full initial evaluation.
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SSTs and RTI are not an appropriate reason to deny evaluation. Collect more new information. You can then request a new meeting.

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### If the initial request is approved... assessment begins



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## A quick detour into assessments...

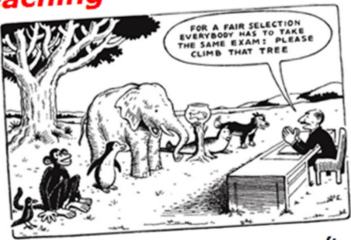
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### Qualitative Information: What about the *quality* of the work?

*Tests do not evaluate, people do.*

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Students *can* escape **bad teaching**



...but they *can't* escape **bad assessment**

(David Boud)

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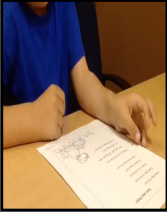
When we exercise or play a sport or dance or sing or draw we make observations about form and technique.

Yes, the statistics (RBIs, Unforced Errors, etc.) matter for the big picture, but the observations and adjustment of form/technique is how we make progress.



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**What do his miscues tell us?  
What do we observe?**

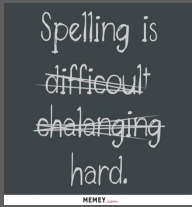


Pets like the sun.  
Cats play in the sun.  
 Dogs run in the sun.  
 Do pets have fun?  
 Yes! Pets like the sun.

Pets do not like the rain.  
 Cats get wet. Dogs get wet.  
 Do pets have fun?  
 No! No! Not in the rain.

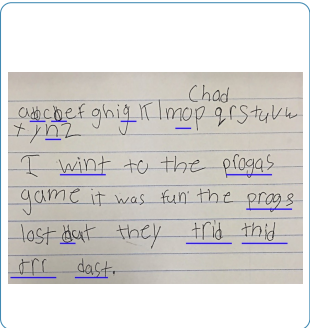
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Everything I need to know about a student's understanding of the English writing system is in his or her spelling.



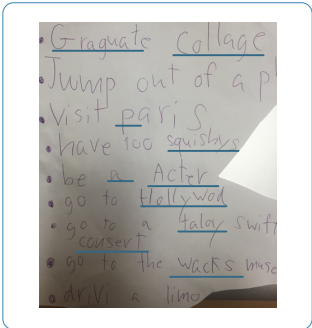
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**Third Grade**



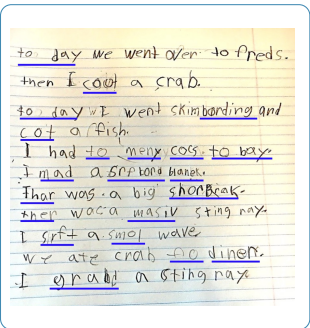
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**Sixth grade**



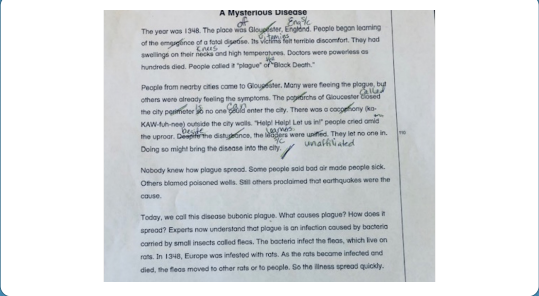
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**8th Grade**



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**A Mysterious Disease**



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### Step Three IEP Meetings

- Initial IEP Meeting- within 60 days\* of consent for assessment
- The team meet at least once a year, but you can meet whenever necessary or requested.
  - Put the request in writing
  - Meeting must be with 30 days\* of written request
- Notice
  - Must be given early enough to make sure everyone can attend
- Mutually agreed upon time & place
  - Must be Mon-Fri during business hours
- Recording
  - Parent can record, but must give \*24-hour notice (make sure to give notice in writing)
  - District can only record if the parent is also recording
- Plan for the best, prepare for the worst.

*(\*Tolling – vacation periods of five or more days are not counted.)*

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### What to expect at the IEP Meeting


**What to expect**

- Everyone at the meeting is part of the IEP Team...including the parent.
- A Review of Procedural Safeguards
- A review and explanation of the testing
- A determination of eligibility
- If determined eligible, then development of the IEP (FAPE) or 504Plan

**Parent Rights at an IEP**

- Parents/Caregivers can bring anyone with knowledge of the child
- Parents/Caregivers have the right and are encouraged to tape every meeting. Must give \*24 hours notice.
- Parents are expected to be part of the team and their input has to be considered.
- Parents/Caregivers and their guests can provide input about the students needs and goals.

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What it can feel like for the parent.


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### 13 Categories of Eligibility for IEP

- Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
- Autism
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Mental Retardation
- Other Health Impaired (OHI)
- Emotional Disturbance
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Deafness
- Deaf-Blindness
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Traumatic Brain Injury

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### IDEA LAW Specific Learning Disability



- **Sec. 300.8 (c) (10)**
- [Statute/Regs Menu](#) » [Regulations](#) » [Part 300](#) » [Subpart A](#) » [Section 300.8](#) » [\(c\)](#) » [1](#)
- (10) Specific learning disability—
- **III. General.** Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- **III. Disorders not included.** Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

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### US Dept of ED : Guidance Memo October 2015



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES  
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 23, 2015

Dear Colleague:

Ensuring a high-quality education for children with specific learning disabilities is a critical responsibility for all of us. I write today to focus particularly on the unique educational needs of children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia, which are conditions that could qualify a child as a child with a specific learning disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has received communications from stakeholders, including parents, advocacy groups, and national disability organizations, who believe that State and local educational agencies (SEAs and LEAs) are reluctant to reference or use dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in evaluations, eligibility determinations, or in developing the individualized education program (IEP) under the IDEA. The purpose of this letter is to clarify 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.

Under the IDEA and its implementing regulations "specific learning disability" is defined, in part, as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including

*"The purpose of this letter is to clarify 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."*

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcflrs/guidance-on-dyslexia-10-2015.pdf>

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### The IEP Document

- Present Levels of Performance (PLOPs)
  - MUST have good PLOPs
  - Describes child's strengths and unique needs that result from disability
- Goals & Objectives
  - Based on PLOPs
  - SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)
- Services
  - Easy to identify if there are good goals and objectives
- Accommodations
  - Accommodations are vital for students to access grade level content and produce grade level content

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### Remember, dyslexia affects...

Reading...  
...and writing!

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### THE MANTRA...

**Needs drive goals and goals drive services.**

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### Goals

- Must respond directly to identified needs
- Have baselines that provide data for measuring progress
- Determine what the child will accomplish during the year. Each goal sets the bar for the identified skill/need(s).
- Should be **based on grade level standards** (look at state standards for guidance)
- Determine services
- Required to have a written progress report at least each regular reporting period

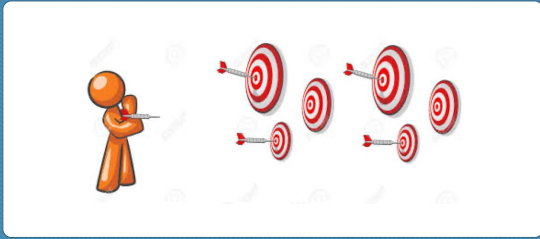
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### Goals

- Be sure too many skills are not incorporated in one goal
  - Reading consists of phonemic awareness/understanding, phonological awareness/understanding, decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, etc
  - Writing consists of spelling, grammar, syntax, semantics, punctuation, drafting, editing, etc
- Be clear what is being measured and how it is being measured
- Should be closing the gap!
- Can state use of accommodation in the goal, but accommodations do not replace direct, explicit instruction to improve the basic skills
  - I.e: To keep a student's skills at grade level for comprehension, a goal could include, "when listening to a grade level text, (student) will be able to identify the main idea and at least three supporting details..."
  - The student should still have decoding goals, comprehension goals, etc., that do not include accommodations

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**Is there a limit to the number of goals?**

**NO!**

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**What's wrong with this goal?**

Jaden will be able to decode multisyllabic words that include words with long vowel sounds (a,e,i) in words like *turmoil* and *chipper*.

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Here are the problems:

- 1) Where are o and u?
- 2) What grade level, how many words – where is the measurable part of the goal?
- 3) The goal states that only one concept will be learned in a year (the long vowel sound of only three of the vowels).
- 4) And, last but certainly not least, *turmoil* and *chipper* do not contain long vowel sounds!

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**Revised Goal**

When given a list of 50 words Jaden will be able to accurately decode multisyllabic words that contain closed, open, vowel teams and vowel-consonant-e (beside, statement, remain) syllable types with 90% accuracy as measured by teacher records.

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**What's wrong with this goal?**

Student will read a passage and be able to determine the main idea and three supporting details.

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Here are the problems:

- 1) This is the only reading goal.
- 2) No grade level.
- 3) No explanation about why the student having difficulty with comprehension.
- 4) If it is a decoding issue, then the a new goal should be added.

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What wrong with this goal for spelling?

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It's not there!



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equality

equity

Accommodations

Equality = SAMENESS

Equity = FAIRNESS

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IDEA LAW AT Assessment



- IDEA defines an 'assistive technology device' as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability (20 U.S.C. 1401(1))
- IDEA defines an 'assistive technology service' as any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes:
  - (A) the evaluation...
  - (B) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices...
  - (C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing....
  - (D) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services...
  - (E) training or technical assistance for child, or...family of such child...
  - (F) training or technical assistance for professionals....
  - (20 U.S.C. 1401(2))

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Accommodations

- Can be requested for a student who has an IEP or 504Plan
- Parent or teacher/school staff can request
- Follows step of assessment request (timelines/procedures)
- Conducted to identify ALL appropriate accommodations
- Included TRAINING of any identified accommodations
- All accommodations are to be provided free of charge
- All accommodations should be documented on IEP or 504Plan even if the school already provides it for all students

Assistive Technology(AT) Assessment

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Main Reasons Students Don't Use Their Accommodations

- 1) They don't know how to use them.
- 2) They don't know when to use them.
- 3) Afraid of what their peers will think.
- 4) Afraid of what their teachers will think.
- 5) Don't have support to use them.

For accommodations to be successful, there must be **TRAINING! TRAINING! TRAINING!**

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## Step Four Signing the IEP

- YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SIGN FOR CONSENT until you are satisfied with the IEP.
- You can sign for attendance only and/or portions of the IEP so those portions can be implemented.
- Once you have signed the IEP for consent it becomes more difficult to change it. But do sign it if you believe it is a good IEP for your child.

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## Step Five After the Signed IEP

**After a signature**

- Monitor progress
- Teachers record progress
- Observations
- Call an IEP at any time
- Add or change goals at any time (Supplemental IEP)

**Annual/Triennial**

- Every year the team reexamines the progress towards goals.
- Every three years the team reevaluates all areas of concern
- Ask for evidence of progress on goals.

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## Parental Consent Requirements

Consent must be obtained before:

- Beginning or changing student's identification as IDEA-eligible
- Conducting a preplacement evaluation
- Initial placement or change of placement
- Conducting a reevaluation
- Consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time

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## Resources for Advocacy

- Dyslexia Training Institute
  - Special Ed Law & Dyslexia (4-week online course)
  - Dyslexia Advocate Certificate Program (9-week online program)
- Wrightslaw – [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)
- COPAA – [www.copaa.org](http://www.copaa.org)
- Decoding Dyslexia – [www.decodingdyslexia.net](http://www.decodingdyslexia.net)
- State Standards – search your Dept of Ed for State Standards
- TechPotential Tool Box – [www.techpotential.net](http://www.techpotential.net)

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### DTI's 7th Annual Dyslexia Virtual Conference

February 27 – March 17, 2023

**14 Workshops**

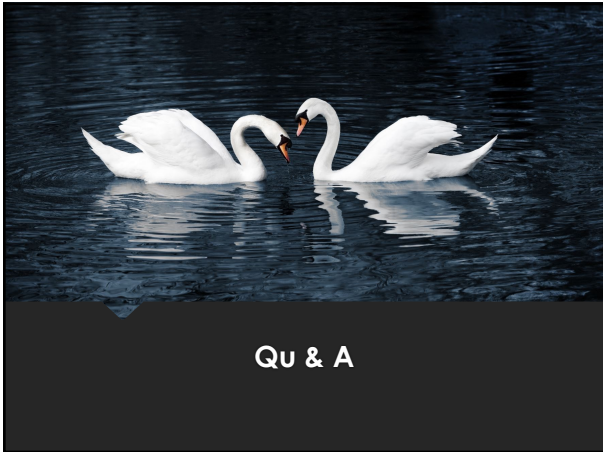
Watch the prerecorded workshops when it fits in your schedule

Credits Available

Registration Now Open

[www.dyslexiatraininginstitute.org](http://www.dyslexiatraininginstitute.org)

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