

Milano Independent School District

Dyslexia Services



Policies and Regulations Handbook

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Definition of Dyslexia

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

- “Dyslexia” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.
- “Related disorders” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The current definition from the International Dyslexia Association states the following:

- 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. 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. (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Board of Directors, November 12, 2002)

Dyslexia Handbook

Link: [The Dyslexia Handbook – Revised 2021](#)

Milano ISD Dyslexia Program

Milano ISD, in partnership with parents, teachers and administrators, will provide all eligible students with research-based, multisensory, and explicit instruction in reading, writing, and spelling.

Dyslexia Program Goals

Milano ISD strives to have an exemplary dyslexia program for students enrolled in grades K–12. Milano ISD monitors students on a regular basis utilizing formal and informal observations, student data and other assessments, including but not limited to, TEA approved dyslexia screener, reading instruments, curriculum-based assessments, benchmarks, teacher formal and informal assessments, and standardized testing.

Pursuant to the TEA’s Dyslexia Handbook, Revised 2021, students being referred for consideration of dyslexia should have demonstrated age/grade level appropriate progress and have received appropriate instruction in reading, including but not limited to an accelerated reading program as required by the state. Students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia should be referred to and considered for a dyslexia evaluation after formal reading instruction has taken

place pursuant to TEC §28.006.

Milano ISD is committed to the development and implementation of a dyslexia program that addresses both the Texas Education Code at §38.003 and the Texas Administrative Code at §74.28.

The goals of the district dyslexia program include:

- Screen, refer and evaluate students in grades K – 12 who may be at-risk of dyslexia and related disorders;
- Provide instructional program options for students identified with dyslexia and related disorders;
- Provide staff development that includes:
 - Characteristics of dyslexia
 - Assessment of dyslexia
 - Intervention strategies and accommodations
- Provide information to parents that includes:
 - Notification of Procedural Safeguards and Rights
 - Awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders
 - Information on testing and the educational diagnosis of dyslexia
 - Information about effective strategies and options for parents to use at home to effectively communicate and help their child with dyslexia and related disorders
 - Information about the audiobooks program maintained by the State Library and Archives Commission
 - Information on state assessment accommodations and/or accommodations allowed for post-secondary testing.

Characteristics of Dyslexia

If the following behaviors are unexpected for an individual's age, educational level, or cognitive abilities, they may be risk factors associated with dyslexia. A student with dyslexia usually exhibits several of these behaviors that persist over time and interfere with his/her learning. A family history of dyslexia may be present; in fact, recent studies reveal that the whole spectrum of reading disabilities is strongly determined by genetic predispositions (inherited aptitudes) (Olson, Keenan, Byrne, & Samuelsson, 2014).

The following characteristics identify risk factors associated with dyslexia at different stages or grade levels.

Preschool

- Delay in learning to talk

- Difficulty with rhyming
- Difficulty pronouncing words (e.g., “pusgetti” for “spaghetti,” “mawn lower” for “lawn mower”)
- Poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- Difficulty adding new vocabulary words
- Inability to recall the right word (word retrieval)
- Trouble learning and naming letters and numbers and remembering the letters in his/ her name
- Aversion to print (e.g., doesn’t enjoy following along if a book is read aloud)

Kindergarten and First Grade

- Difficulty breaking words into smaller parts, or syllables (e.g., “baseball” can be pulled apart into “base” “ball” or “napkin” can be pulled apart into “nap” “kin”)
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating sounds in syllables (e.g., “man” sounded out as /m//ă//n/)
- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling their corresponding sounds
- Difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Difficulty spelling words the way they sound (phonetically) or remembering letter sequences in very common words seen often in print (e.g., “sed” for “said”)

Second Grade and Third Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty recognizing common sight words (e.g., “to,” “said,” “been”)
- Difficulty decoding single words
- Difficulty recalling the correct sounds for letters and letter patterns in reading
- Difficulty connecting speech sounds with appropriate letter or letter combinations and omitting letters in words for spelling (e.g., “after” spelled “eftr”)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Reliance on picture clues, story theme, or guessing at words
- Difficulty with written expressions

Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic, along with the following:

- Difficulty reading aloud (e.g., fear of reading aloud in front of classmates)
- Avoidance of reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Acquisition of less vocabulary due to reduced independent reading
- Use of less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell than more appropriate words (e.g., “big” instead of “enormous”)
- Reliance on listening rather than reading for comprehension

Middle School and High School

Many of the previously described behaviors remain problematic, along with the following:

- Difficulty with the volume of reading and written work
- Frustration with the amount of time required and energy expended for reading
- Difficulty reading fluently (e.g., reading is slow, inaccurate, and/or without expression)
- Difficulty decoding unfamiliar words in sentences using knowledge of phonics
- Difficulty with written assignments
- Tendency to avoid reading (particularly for pleasure)
- Difficulty learning a foreign language

Postsecondary

Some students will not be identified as having dyslexia prior to entering college. The early years of reading difficulties evolve into slow, labored reading fluency. Many students will experience extreme frustration and fatigue due to the increasing demands of reading as the result of dyslexia. In making a diagnosis for dyslexia, a student’s reading history, familial/genetic predisposition, and assessment history are critical. Many of the previously described behaviors may remain problematic along with the following:

- Difficulty pronouncing names of people and places or parts of words
- Difficulty remembering names of people and places

- Difficulty with word retrieval
- Difficulty with spoken vocabulary
- Difficulty completing the reading demands for multiple course requirements
- Difficulty with note taking
- Difficulty with written production
- Difficulty remembering sequences (e.g., mathematical and/or scientific formulas)

Since dyslexia is a neurobiological, language-based disability that persists over time and interferes with an individual's learning, it is critical that identification and intervention occur as early as possible.

- 2021 TEA Dyslexia Handbook, pages 3-4

Screening Information

Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §38.003, all kindergarten and first-grade students shall be screened at appropriate times for dyslexia and related disorders. Kindergarten students are screened at the end of the school year and first-grade students are screened before January 31st.

Screening components include:

Kindergarten	First Grade
Letter Sound Knowledge or Letter Naming Fluency	Word Reading Accuracy or Fluency
Phonological Awareness	Phonological Awareness

Currently, Milano ISD uses TX-KEA in Kindergarten and TPRI in 1st grade to meet the requirements of TEC §38.003, K/1 Dyslexia Screening. Notifications are given to families of students determined to be at-risk for dyslexia based on screening results.

Reading Instruments

The following reading instruments are used to identify student reading development and comprehension:

Kindergarten: TX-KEA

1st grade: TPRI and Renaissance Place STAR Reading Assessment

2nd grade: TPRI and Renaissance Place STAR Reading Assessment

7th grade (for students who were not proficient on the sixth-grade Reading STAAR test):

Reading Plus

Parents of students in grades K-2 will be notified of students who are determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on reading instrument results.

Evaluation and Identification

Students who are identified as being at-risk of dyslexia will be referred for a formal evaluation, or a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under IDEA. The referral process and evaluations will be completed through Burleson-Milam Special Services (BMSS). Parents will be notified of the referral and consent must be provided before testing can begin.

Parents also have the right to request an evaluation at any time if they suspect their child may be at-risk for dyslexia. The district will review all data regarding the student's progress and will begin the referral process through BMSS to determine if a formal evaluation needs to be completed.

A formal evaluation is a battery of tests used to determine whether a student demonstrates the specific characteristics and underlying causes of dyslexia and/or any other cognitive impairment. Testing results will be analyzed by qualified personnel and will be shared with parents.

Instruction

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the ARD (admission, review, and dismissal) committee must then determine if the student requires special education as a result of that disability. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, using the information collected during the FIIE. If data shows that a student requires specially designed instruction along with standard protocol dyslexia instruction, the ARD committee will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will meet the unique needs of that student. If the student only needs accommodations, or if the parent declines special education services, the student may be eligible for a 504 plan.

Standard Protocol Dyslexia Instruction

Milano ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in TEC §38.003. Dyslexia instruction must include the following evidence-based components:

- Phonological Awareness
- Sound-symbol Association
- Syllabication
- Orthography
- Morphology

- Syntax
- Reading Comprehension

Our Program

Miano Elementary currently uses Reading by Design, which is aligned with the descriptors found in the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook. The descriptors include the components of phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllabication, orthography, morphology, syntax, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. Instructional approaches include simultaneous, multisensory, systematic and cumulative, explicit, diagnostic teaching to automaticity, synthetic and analytic instruction.

Dysgraphia

Texas Education Code 38.003 requires districts to identify all students with dyslexia and related disorders. Dysgraphia falls into this category of “related disorders”.

Definition

Dysgraphia is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects written language. Whereas students with dyslexia have difficulty with word-level skills such as decoding, word identification, and spelling, those with dysgraphia have trouble with handwriting and letter formation.

A student with dysgraphia struggles with orthographic memory. During the writing process, a student must first retrieve a letter from memory, and then hold the letter in their “minds eye” as they recall the sequential order of forming the letter. This is called the “orthographic loop”. When a student has dysgraphia, they have difficulty holding the letter in their mind long enough to write it down. It is for this reason that writing is such a taxing and exhausting process. Often educators attribute messy handwriting to lack of effort or laziness, claiming that a student can write neatly if they “really try”. This is not true for students with dysgraphia.

Characteristics of Dysgraphia:

- Frustration and writing avoidance
- Incomplete letter formation
- Illegible/poor handwriting
- Mixture of capital and lowercase letters
- Misuse of space between words and letters
- Swimming/floating letters
- Excessive erasure marks
- Discrepancy between written and oral language skills

Dysgraphia is NOT caused by:

- Lack of effective handwriting instruction
- A damaged motor nervous system

- Fine motor deficits
- Laziness/lack of effort by student

Screening and Identification

When dysgraphia is suspected, a student can be referred for screening by either the parent or teacher. Data will be collected to determine if a student is at risk for dysgraphia. If the data shows evidence of dysgraphia, additional qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered. The student will then be formally evaluated for dysgraphia through BMSS.

Dysgraphia Intervention and Instruction

It is critical that content delivery is consistent with research-based practices. Effective intervention for students with dysgraphia should include the following:

- Simultaneous and multisensory (VACT)
- Systematic and cumulative
- Explicit instruction

Parent Communication

Teachers will maintain open communication with parents/guardians on an ongoing basis. A link to the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook will be made available to all parents/guardians via the Milano ISD website. Teachers will send home written communication throughout all stages of the screening process. Parents/guardians will be informed of all available dyslexia services offered here at Milano ISD.

Talking Book Program

Throughout Texas, children with dyslexia and other disabilities that prevent them from reading standard print are enjoying the world of reading through the Talking Book Program (TBP). TBP provides students with reading disabilities the opportunity to borrow audiobooks free of charge. Talking Book Program is a **free** service that allows students with a reading disability, like dyslexia, the opportunity to read. TBP offers more than 125,000 titles and 80 plus magazines, all read audibly. Materials can be downloaded via the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) Mobile app, to a smartphone or tablet.

For more information or for questions, visit www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/reading_disabilities, send an email to tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov or call 1-800-252-9605. TBP staff will be happy to answer your questions and help you apply for service.

Dyslexia Information Links

[Dyslexia Basics - IDA \(English\)](#)

[TEA Dyslexia Fact Sheet - English](#)

[Dyslexia Basics - IDA \(Spanish\)](#)

[TEA Dyslexia Fact Sheet - Spanish](#)
[2021 Texas Dyslexia Handbook](#)
[2021 Dyslexia Handbook - Spanish](#)