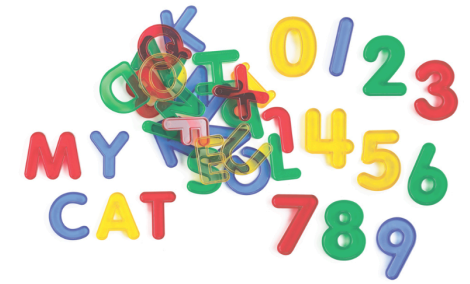


# What is Dyslexia?

Simply put, dyslexia is a specific learning disability (SLD) that makes it far harder to learn to read, write or do number work.

The underlying theme through all modern definitions is that dyslexia involves an unexpected and persistent difficulty in learning to read, write and spell that cannot be explained by other factors.



The exact causes of dyslexia are still not completely clear. Research shows that there are neurological differences – people with dyslexia have brains that are wired slightly differently from most.

It's important to remember not all people with dyslexia have the same level of difficulties. However, most people with dyslexia have some problems identifying the separate speech sounds within a word, and learning how letters represent those sounds. Thus, reading, spelling, writing, and maths can become a challenge to varying degrees.



Dyslexia is often first uncovered in the classroom when core reading and writing is being taught. However, it is equally common for dyslexia to go undiagnosed, with individuals labelled as 'slow' or 'struggling' due to unexpected difficulties acquiring these skills.

Dyslexia occurs in children and adults of all levels of ability and often runs in families. Estimates vary, but possibly up to 10% of the population may have some degree of dyslexia.

The Ministry of Education recognises dyslexia as a term that covers a 'spectrum of specific learning disabilities' and has drafted a working definition as a starting point for New Zealand schools. This can be found at:

[http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy\\_numeracy/lit\\_dyslexia\\_working\\_definition\\_e.php](http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/lit_dyslexia_working_definition_e.php).

References:

[Dyslexia - SPELD NZ](#)

[Dyslexia Foundation of NZ](#)