Read This

A quick Q&A about dyslexia, a common learning disability.

August 27, 2015 By Kate Ferguson

According to understood.org, a comprehensive free online resource for parents of children with learning and attention issues, moms and dads play a vital role in their children's success.

Fifteen nonprofit organizations teamed to launch Understood, which is specifically designed to help parents who don't know why their kids are having difficulty learning, as well as those who have received a diagnosis confirming their child's need for special services in school, to help overcome the problem.

Here, Sheldon H. Horowitz, EdD, the director of learning disabilities resources at the National Center for Learning Disabilities, answers basic questions about dyslexia, a learning and attention issue that commonly result in difficulties reading for those who suffer from the problem.

What exactly is dyslexia?
Dyslexia is a specific reading disability that impacts an individual's ability to both learn how to read and, once they become readers, impacts a bunch of other different areas that are necessary for success in reading pretty much throughout their lifetime.

What causes dyslexia?
Well, we don't really know what the cause of dyslexia is, but we know that dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities run in families. This means if you have someone with dyslexia and you look at their family tree, it's not uncommon to see others in the family who have dyslexia.

How exactly does dyslexia affect someone's ability to read and to learn in general?
I would say that dyslexia impacts a person's ability to learn how to read successfully. But dyslexia also impacts other areas of a person's learning and attention profile. For example, if you're a good reader, you're going to be able to sound out certain words, certain letters, and know that those letters map together and that they blend together to create words that have meaning. If you don't have the ability to be aware that letters and sounds associate with each other in a very particular, structured kind of way, then you're going to have difficulties learning to read, and that is one of the hallmarks of dyslexia.

How is dyslexia detected?

What we look for has to do with watching children while they're reading, giving them reading tasks, doing a very careful task analysis, and sort of unpacking and figuring out what the child is doing and not doing. Also, we watch what they do in one setting versus another setting. In addition, we try to understand whether or not, for example, they may have some short-term memory issues that are interfering with their ability to hold on to information and then do something with it. There are kids who have dyslexia who read and who are able to read really well, but then they don't understand what they're reading and have to go back again and read for meaning. The evaluations we do for dyslexia are not brain scans and they're not blood tests; they're behavioral measures, they're academic measures that entail us asking kids to do certain things that tap into they way they think and remember. These are ways of retrieving information that are important when you're an efficient reader.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Dyslexia-learningdisabilities-reading-27688-3770