

What is the “Say Dyslexia” Law?

The Tennessee “Say Dyslexia” law was passed in 2016. The law requires school districts to screen all students for characteristics of dyslexia through their existing Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) procedures. School teams will use screening information to determine the need for dyslexia-specific intervention.

Parents will receive a letter if their child demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia *and* needs intervention.

Receiving a letter does NOT mean your child has dyslexia; however, it does mean:

- Your child is struggling with one or more foundational aspects of reading, such as sounding out words, spelling, or reading accurately.
- Your child will receive additional small group intervention using methods that are effective in building foundational skills.

Receiving a letter also means schools have additional obligations:

- School teams will review your child’s progress data regularly to determine if interventions are effective.
- School teams will change interventions as needed.
- The school will send home updates about your child’s progress approximately every 4.5 weeks.
- School teams may consider the use of accommodations and assistive technology.
- School teams may make referrals for evaluations as needed (see *Dyslexia Resource Guide* for more information).

In order to address the individual needs of the student, a continuum of support may include:

- Tiered interventions through Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²);
- Accommodations provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and/or
- Special education interventions and accommodations.

Please see the links on the back for additional information.

The screening process must include assessment of the following characteristics of dyslexia:

Difficulties	General Definition
Phonological awareness	When a child listens, the ability to recognize and identify sounds and words in spoken language when no print is involved (e.g., recognize and identify individual words within sentences, sounds and syllables within words, blending and changing sounds to create new words, and rhyming)
Phonemic awareness	The awareness of individual sounds within the spoken word and the ability to manipulate those sounds when no print is involved (i.e., a subcomponent of phonological awareness)
Alphabet knowledge	Ability to name letters of the alphabet
Sound/symbol recognition	Ability to identify the sounds that letters and letter combinations make
Decoding skills	Ability to sound out words and read words using phonics (linking letters and sounds)
Encoding skills	Ability to spell words
Rapid naming	Ability to quickly and accurately name familiar things (e.g., letters, objects, shapes, colors, etc.)

Tips for Parents

Ask your child's school:

- Who is the best person to speak with about my child's current reading program and progress?
- Who should I contact if I believe my child has a disability requiring 504 or special education services?

Other things you can do:

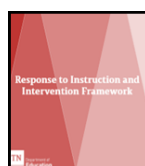
- Read to and with your child and listen to audiobooks together.
- Always praise your child's reading and spelling efforts and never criticize them.
- Celebrate all reading and spelling progress and realize improvements take time.
- Create an organized space for schoolwork and a comfortable place for reading.
- Work with the school to find simple, easy to use tools to help with reading and writing.

Resources

- Tips for Parents of Children with Dyslexia bit.ly/2FErynK
- Decoding Dyslexia Tennessee bit.ly/2sFR6PU
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA) dyslexiaida.org
- International Dyslexia Association - Tennessee tnida.org
- MTSU Center on Dyslexia www.mtsu.edu/dyslexia/

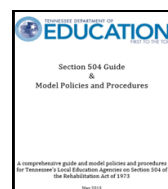
RTI² Manual

bit.ly/TNDOErti



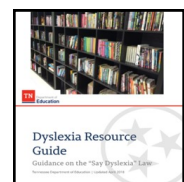
504 Guide

bit.ly/2sYWpKb



Tennessee Dyslexia Resource Guide

bit.ly/2Cy2cpG



For more information contact: TNSTEP www.tnstep.org 1.800.280.7837

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