


Dyslexia Does Not Equal Dysgraphia, But Does Dysgraphia Equal Dyslexia?

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Dyslexia Does Not Equal Dysgraphia, But Does Dysgraphia Equal Dyslexia?

More importantly, does Dysgraphia equal a Specific Learning Disability in Written Expression?

1


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2

Is Dysgraphia a Specific Learning Disability?



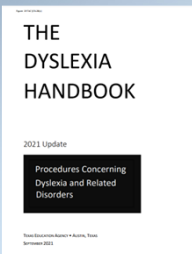
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Why is this even a question?

- The District must ensure that the IEP team determines the student's eligibility for special education in accordance with 34 CFR §300.306.
- This includes a student suspected to have a disorder of dysgraphia.
- The updated Dyslexia Handbook changed the process in Texas.

4

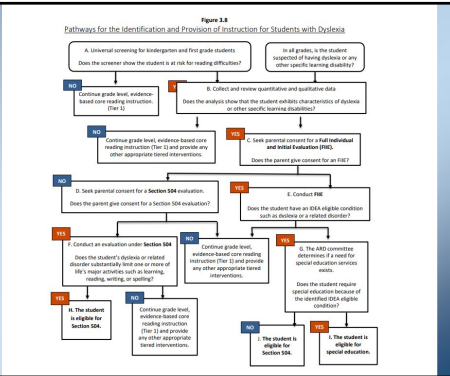
Move to "Single Pathway"



The 2021 Dyslexia Handbook requires that anytime the LEA suspects the student has dyslexia or a related disorder, and needs services, the LEA must seek parental consent for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIE) under the IDEA.

5

The Flow Chart Texas Dyslexia Handbook 2021



6

Why follow the IDEA referral process for Dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability. Therefore, the evaluation/identification of dyslexia is treated the same way as other IDEA eligible disability categories in terms of the referral process. Anytime the LEA suspects or has reason to suspect that a student has dyslexia or a related disorder, and needs services, the LEA must seek parental consent for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. (Appendix A: Questions and Answers – Updated October 2022.)

7

Why must LEAs follow procedures for evaluation under IDEA?

- Along with state and local requirements to screen and identify students who may be at risk for dyslexia, there are also overarching federal laws...referred to as Child Find. Child Find is a provision in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)...that requires the state to...ensure that every student in the state who needs special education and related services is located, identified, and evaluated...a student suspected of having dyslexia may be a student with a disability under the IDEA, the Child Find mandate includes these students. Therefore, when referring and evaluating students suspected of having dyslexia, LEAs must follow procedures for conducting a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. (Appendix A: Questions and Answers – Updated October 2022.)

8

Dysgraphia

- Dysgraphia is a written language disorder in serial production of strokes to form a handwritten letter. This involves not only motor skills but also language skills – finding, retrieving and producing letters, which is a sub-word-level language skill (Berninger, Richards, & Abbott, 2015).

9

Dysgraphia

- Neurodevelopmental disorder manifested by illegible and/or inefficient handwriting due to difficulty with letter formation. This difficulty is the result of deficits in graphomotor function (hand movements used for writing) and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes (letter forms) (Berninger, 2015).

10

Characteristics of Dysgraphia may include the following:

- Variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Excessive erasures and cross-outs
- Poor spacing between letters and words
- Letter and number reversals beyond early stages of writing
- Awkward, inconsistent pencil grip
- Heavy pressure and hand fatigue
- Slow writing and copying with legible or illegible handwriting (Andrews & Lombardino, 2014)

- Additional consequences of dysgraphia may also include:
- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
 - Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written

- The Dyslexia Handbook 2021

11

Underlying Causes of Dysgraphia

- Memory for letter or symbol sequences (orthographic process)
- Fine-motor control, motor planning, visual-motor integration (graphomotor process)

12

What is Specific Learning Disability in Written Expression

13

Characteristics of SLD-WE:

Student exhibits difficulties in:

- Handwriting (legible and automatic)
- Spelling
- Composing (fluency and quality)
- Planning and revising in composing

14

Underlying Causes of SLD for Written Expression

- Phonological Awareness
- Coding – including orthographic processing
- Graphomotor
- Perceptual Reasoning
- Attention and Executive Functioning
- Working Memory
- Language
- RAN/RAS

15

Let's Talk About TEA Complaints

- Student referred for evaluation for SLD in Reading/Dyslexia, Writing, and Dysgraphia
- FIE determined student had disorder of Dysgraphia
- School staff determined in IEP meeting that student is not eligible for special education because when accommodated for spelling and handwriting, student did not require specialized instruction
- Parent and advocate challenged the ARD committee decision
- TEA found that the IEP team made the eligibility determination in accordance with 34 CFR §300.306.

16

Common Scenario – Uncommon Outcome

- This challenge is occurring in multiple school districts regarding Dyslexia (or related disorders).
- The things learned are:
 - The District drew upon a variety of sources
 - Identified the disorder, but clearly stated the student did not require specialized instruction
 - Prior written notice also clearly stated student did not require specialized instruction

17

Typical TEA Response

- Student was a "dyslexia success story"
- The dyslexia interventions worked, but Parent then referred for a FIE.
- The FIE read in part, [The student's] teachers do not have concerns that s/he is unable to complete the expectations of the classes. In the big picture, his/her weaknesses do not significantly [impair] his/her educational progress. . . . Based on the results of his/her FIE, [the student] does not meet eligibility as a student with a disability, therefore s/he does not meet eligibility for special education services.
- TEA said ARD committee ignored the 2-prong test for eligibility.

18

Going Forward

- It is important, particularly for DNQs, for the ARD committees to document in deliberations and prior written notice
 - recent data on the student's progress and
 - the opinion of the educators at that time as to whether they believe the student has a need for special education services.
- In other words, specifically and separately discuss the two prongs of eligibility in the ARD committee meeting.

19

Two Prongs

- 1) A child has a disability as defined in the statute; and
- 2) The child is in need of special education and related services.



20

Let's hear from you

- Parent requested a special education evaluation for a specific learning disability (dyslexia)
- District did not suspect a SLD, but started Tier 2 response to intervention
- Parent files complaint alleging District refused an evaluation

Give me the good

Give me the not so good

21

Let's hear from you

- Parent refers first grader for a special education evaluation for OHI (ADHD) and SLD (Dyslexia).
- Staff says parent should allow more time for RTI before evaluating and parent withdraws request
- Student continues to struggle, and parent renews request
- District evaluation identifies Dyslexia and holds a 504 meeting to initiate Standard Protocol Dyslexia services and District holds an ARD meeting to consider eligibility under OHI.

Give me the good

Give me the not so good

22

Let's hear from you

- Twice exceptional high school student with disabilities (OHI, SLD for written expression)
- School sent work home for additional writing practice
- Staff suggested the student might benefit from the parent helping the student get ideas on paper
- Student provided instruction for writing at school

Give me the good

Give me the not so good

23

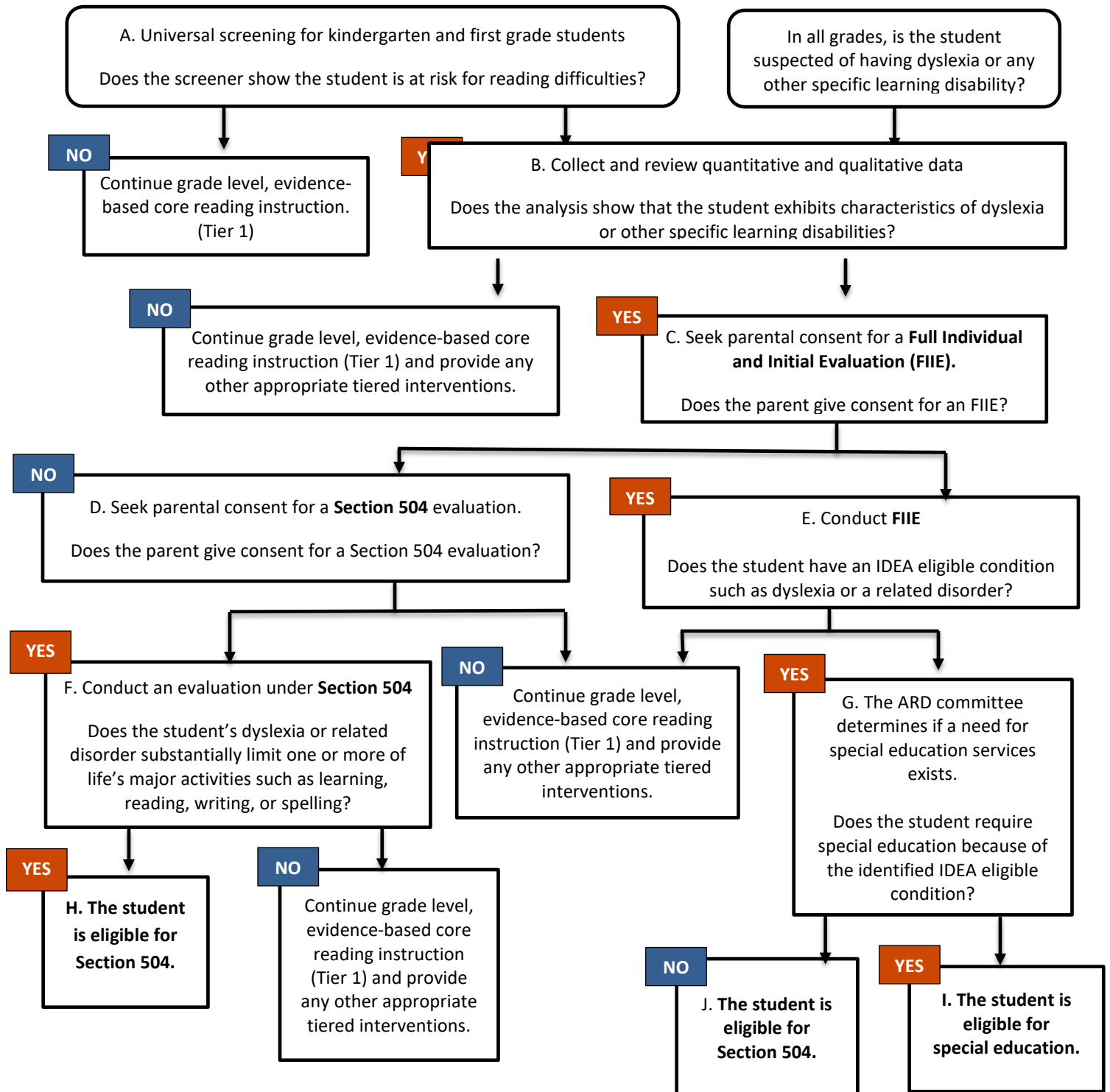
Questions?



24

Figure 3.8

Pathways for the Identification and Provision of Instruction for Students with Dyslexia



*See next page for additional detail.