

Dysgraphia and Dyslexia Indicators: Analyzing Children's Writing

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BACKGROUND

Prevalence:

- 37.1% of U.S. students receiving IDEA services qualify under Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD).

Problem:

- Late diagnosis harms academic/social success. Many children are not identified with dysgraphia or dyslexia until after Grade 3, delaying interventions.

DEFINITIONS

Dysgraphia: Neurodevelopmental disorder impacting handwriting due to motor/planning difficulties.

Dyslexia: Difficulty in accurate/fluent word recognition, decoding, and spelling caused by phonological deficits.

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Both disorders can co-occur.

Behavioral indicators like spelling errors, grammar issues, and poor legibility can suggest either or both.

Both may show:

- ✓ Spelling errors
- ✓ Slow writing
- ✓ Letter reversals

KEY INDICATORS

 **Dysgraphia:** Inconsistent letter sizing, poor spacing, inversions.

 **Dyslexia:** Limited vocabulary, disorganized ideas.

THE DDBIC TOOL

The DDBIC (Dysgraphia and Dyslexia Behavioral Indicator Checklist) is a practical checklist used to spot and address learning disabilities in writing/reading early.

4 indicators during writing:

-  Pencil grip
-  Pressure
-  Speed
-  Frustration

13 indicators after writing:

- Dysgraphia (6)
- Dyslexia (2)
- Both (5)



HOW TO USE THE DDBIC



Design a Writing Task

- Choose an age-appropriate prompt (e.g., list, sentence, story, paragraph)



Observe Behaviors Live

- During the writing activity, watch for:
 - Pencil grip
 - Writing pressure
 - Speed
 - Frustration/avoidance



Analyze the Sample

- Review finished writing for 13 indicators:
 - Dysgraphia (W)
 - Dyslexia (R)
 - Both (B)
- ✓ Use the DDBIC to mark "Yes" or "No" for each



Plan Interventions (Tiers 1-3)

- Match indicators to level of support:
 - Tier 1: Whole-class instruction
 - Tier 2: Small group interventions
 - Tier 3: Referral for evaluation (SLP/OT)

CONCLUSION

Early identification of **dysgraphia** and **dyslexia** is critical to ensuring children receive the support they need to thrive. By using the **DDBIC checklist**, educators can:

- ✓ **Spot early warning signs** in writing samples.
- ✓ **Design targeted interventions** (Tier 1–3 support).
- ✓ **Collaborate with specialists** (OTs, SLPs) for effective referrals.

With the right tools and awareness, educators can help students overcome challenges and build confidence in their learning journey. **Early action today leads to brighter futures tomorrow!**

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