Increasing Awareness of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)/Dyslexia: Implications for Connecticut Educators

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Projects and Initiatives

SLD/Dyslexia Initiative

CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

#ctdyslexia

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Welcome and Introductions

Webinar Presenters

- Patricia Anderson, Ph.D.
- Jule McCombes-Tolis, Ph.D.
- Margie Gillis, Ed.D.
- Perri Murdica, Ed.D.

Join the conversation!
#ctdyslexia

[2]

Webinar Agenda

9:00-9:10   **Introductions**
9:10-9:20   **CSDE Updates**
9:20-9:45   **Identifying SLD/Dyslexia**
9:45-10:00   **Q and A**
10:00-10:25   **Linking Assessment to Instruction**
10:25-10:40   **Q and A**
10:40-11:05   **Considering the District Perspective**
11:05-11:25   **Q and A**
11:25-11:30   **Wrapping up**

CSDE UPDATES

[4]

New Legislation

Public Act 14-39

An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood, Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education and **Concerning Dyslexia and Special Education**

5

Legislative Language

❖ Not later than January 1, 2015, the Department of Education shall add "SLD - Dyslexia" under "Specific Learning Disabilities" in the "Primary Disability" section of the individualized education program form used by planning and placement teams for the provision of special education and related services to children requiring special education and related services.

6

CSDE Actions

❖ Assembled an **internal** Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia (SLD/Dyslexia) advisory group to address the requirements of the legislation and consider the needs of the field regarding the upcoming change in the "Primary Disability" section of the IEP document.

❖ Compiled an **external** SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup comprised of a wide range of stakeholders who have met monthly to guide CSDE.

7

CSDE Actions

❖ Revised IEP document to include "SLD/Dyslexia" in the Primary Disability section on page one

❖ Revised *IEP Manual*

❖ Communicated changes to electronic IEP vendors

❖ Revised SEDAC data collection file layout

8

SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup Objectives

❖ Explored issues surrounding the identification and instruction of students with SLD/Dyslexia

❖ Reviewed and identified a shared understanding and definition of "dyslexia"

❖ Identified pertinent legislation and implementation practices from other states

❖ Discussed evidence-based practices for the screening, identification, and instruction of students with SLD/Dyslexia

10

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is dyslexia?
2. Who can identify a child with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)/Dyslexia?
3. What is a comprehensive evaluation for a child suspected of having SLD/Dyslexia?
4. Is a child identified with SLD/Dyslexia automatically qualified for special education services?
5. What is appropriate specialized instruction for a student with SLD/Dyslexia?

[11]

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

➢ SLD/Dyslexia FAQs are located under "Eligibility Documents" following the *Guidelines on Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities*: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322672#Elig

➢ The responses to the FAQs are based on information from the *LD Guidelines* and updated with new research and input from the SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup.

[12]

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

➢ The complete CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia can be found as the response to the first FAQ - "What is Dyslexia."

➢ The IEP Manual contains the IDEA definition of specific learning disabilities and the initial segment of the CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia.

13

DEFINING DYSLEXIA

14

Specific Learning Disabilities

Under IDEA, "Specific Learning Disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage." (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(10))

IEP Manual and Forms (CSDE, 2006, 2015)

15

Dyslexia as a Subcategory of SLD

- Dyslexia is a sub-category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and has been added so that the Department can distinguish students with Dyslexia from other students with SLD who are reported in this disability category. For a child to be identified as "SLD/Dyslexia," the child must first meet the overall eligibility requirements for SLD and then meet the more specific requirements for Dyslexia as follows:

- Dyslexia is included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) as a specific learning disability (SLD). Dyslexia impacts reading, specifically decoding and accurate and/or fluent word recognition and spelling. Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and is unexpected and/or inconsistent with a student's other abilities despite the provision of appropriate instruction. Dyslexia results from a <u>significant deficit</u> in phonological processing (i.e., a persistent difficulty in the awareness of and ability to manipulate the individual sounds of spoken language).

    Continued …

IEP Manual and Forms (CSDE, 2006, 2015)

16

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia: Essential Components

- Is **a Specific Learning Disability**/ Neurobiological in Origin
- **Impacts Reading**
  - Decoding
  - Accurate Word Recognition
  - Fluent Word Recognition
  - Spelling
- Is Unexpected and/or **Inconsistent** with Student's Other Abilities
- **Persists** Despite the Provision of Appropriate Instruction
- Results from Significant Deficits in **Phonological Processing**

17

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia: Essential Components
(cont.)

18

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia: Essential Components
(cont.)

- **Early identification** of phonological processing deficits and intervention may minimize educational impact

19

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia: Essential Components
(cont.)

- Without **targeted, systematic** and **explicit instruction** and the provision of accommodations, students with dyslexia may have:
  - Reduced reading experiences that can impact the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge,
  - Difficulty with written expression,
  - Difficulty learning a second language, and/or
  - Behavioral or emotional reactions

20

IDENTIFYING SLD/DYSLEXIA

21

Dyslexia: Addressed in LD Guidelines

Specific Word Decoding Difficulties	Specific Reading Comprehension Difficulties	Mixed Reading Difficulties
• Nonalphabetic Word Reader • Inaccurate Word Reader • Nonautomatic Word Reader	• Nonstrategic Comprehender • Suboptimal Comprehender	• Mix of Both Word Recognition and Comprehension Difficulties

Guidelines for Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities (2010)   22

Red Flags: Pre-School

- May talk later than most children
- May have difficulty with rhyming
- May have difficulty pronouncing words (i.e., busgetti for spaghetti, mawn lower for lawn mower)
- May have poor auditory memory for nursery rhymes and chants
- May be slow to add new vocabulary words
- May be unable to recall the right word
- May have trouble learning numbers, days of the week, colors, shapes, and how to spell and write his or her name

23

Red Flags: K-3

- Fails to understand that words come apart; for example, that snowman can be pulled apart into snow and man and, later on, that the word man can be broken down still further and sounded out as /m/ /ă/ /n/
- Has difficulty learning the letter names and their corresponding sounds
- Has difficulty decoding single words (reading single words in isolation)
- Has difficulty spelling phonetically
- Reads dysfluently (choppy and labored)
- Relies on context to recognize a word

24

Red Flags: 4-12

- Has a history of reading and spelling difficulties
- Avoids reading aloud
- Reads most materials slowly; oral reading is labored, not fluent
- Avoids reading for pleasure
- May have an inadequate vocabulary
- Has difficulty spelling; may resort to using less complicated words in writing that are easier to spell

Sources for Common Evidence of Dyslexia:
Common Signs, (n.d.). Retrieved July 10, 2006, from The International Dyslexia Association Web site.
Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program (Shaywitz, 2003)

25

Screening for Dyslexia

- Brief
- Assess Specific Skills Highly Correlated with a Broader Indicator of Reading Achievement
- Purpose is to Identify Students Likely to Be in Need of Intervention

- ❑ Letter Naming Fluency
- ❑ Phonological Awareness Skills
- ❑ Letter Sound Identification
- ❑ Single Word Decoding
- ❑ Rapid Naming
- ❑ Oral Reading Fluency
- ❑ Encoding
- ❑ Reading Comprehension
- ❑ Handwriting

26

Screening for Dyslexia: Existing Frameworks

- Menu of Research-Based K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments (CT Department of Education)
  - http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/language_arts/the_approved_menu_grade_k_3_reading_assessments.pdf

[27]

Screening for Dyslexia: Existing Frameworks (cont.)

- If your district has already adopted one of the measures listed above as part of your SRBI model, you are more than half-way there!
  - ✓ Letter Naming Fluency (K)
  - ✓ Letter Sound Fluency (K; 1 (F/W)
  - ✓ Oral Reading Fluency: (1-6)
  - ✓ Reading Comprehension: (1-6)

[28]

Augmenting Existing Frameworks

Consider adding the following to your universal screening protocols:

- Red Flag Checklist
- CORE Phonological Segmentation Test (K-1)
- CORE Phoneme Deletion Test (K-3)
- CORE Phonics Survey (K-8)
- Words Their Way Spelling Inventory: Elementary (1-3)

29

Screening for Dyslexia – At Risk... Now What?

- Districts must develop decision rules for inclusion of students in SRBI tiers of intervention using performance profiles and cut points
- Non-responders or slow responders receiving Tier 3 interventions should receive additional diagnostic reading assessments; if a disability is suspected at any point, then the student should be referred to special education

30

Dyslexia: A Formal Evaluation Should Include …

- assessment of "red flag" areas (i.e., address specific referral questions)
- focused assessments of component language and reading abilities
- input from an interdisciplinary team (e.g., speech and language; special education; reading; assistive technology, school psychology)

31

Dyslexia: Formal Evaluation

Developmental History	Review of Educational Records
	Identification
Classroom Observations	Review of Formal Assessment Results
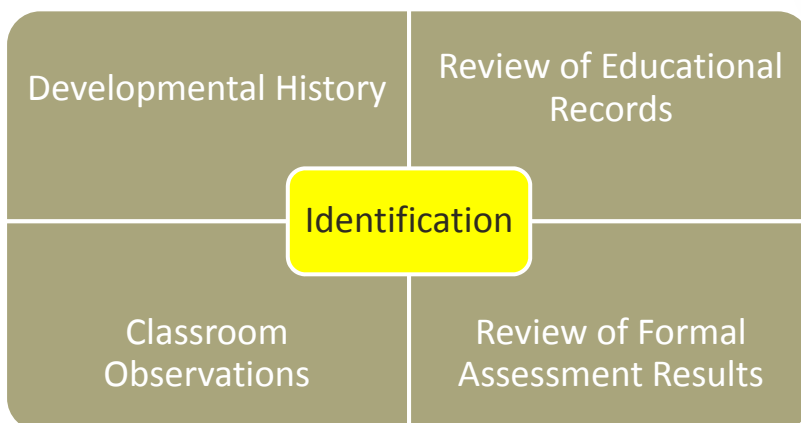
32

Dyslexia Identification: Summary of Big Ideas

1 • Develop/ Administer a Red Flag Checklist for K-8

2 • Administer Early Screening to K-3

3 • Train Faculty: Classroom Observation Protocol

4 • Train Faculty: Diagnostic Reasoning for Identification

33

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

34

LINKING ASSESSMENT TO INSTRUCTION

35

You have an identification of dyslexia. You know what the student's reading difficulties are. Now what?

Three main points:

1. Choose an intervention that matches each student's profile (i.e., learning/language/ literacy strengths and weaknesses)

36

Now What? (cont.)

2. Monitor each student's progress frequently in order to individualize and adjust the instruction.

3. Nurture each student's assets and talents to counterbalance learning challenges.

37

The Many Strands that are Woven into Skilled Reading
(Scarborough, 2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION   **LC**

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

VERBAL REASONING

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE

increasingly strategic

Skilled Reading- fluent coordination of word reading and comprehension processes

WORD RECOGNITION   **D**

PHON. AWARENESS

DECODING (and SPELLING)

SIGHT RECOGNITION

increasingly automatic

RC

38

Reading is a multifaceted skill, gradually acquired over years of instruction and practice.

Simple View of Reading (D x LC = RC)
(Gough & Tunmer, 1986)

Phonological Skills

	Poor Word Reading	*Good Word Reading*
Poor Comp **Language Comp Skills (non-phonolog)**	Garden Variety Poor Readers: Majority of poor readers (weak phonolog processing AND comprehension-related issues)	Specific Comprehension Deficit (weak vocabulary, syntax, discourse-level processing and comp strategies)
Good Comp	***Dyslexic/RD (phonological processing problems - including decoding and encoding)***	Skilled readers

39

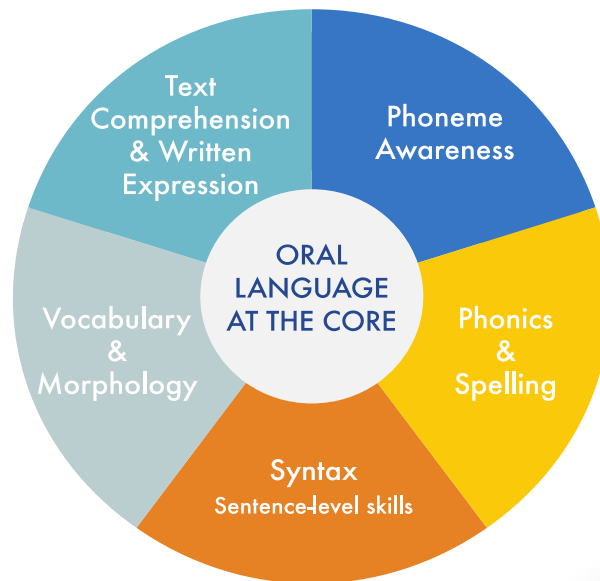## One Size Doesn't Fit All

A student's difficulties must be identified and interventions adjusted to meet each one's individual needs.

I'm Sure He'll Fit...

40

Literacy How Reading Wheel

41

Phoneme Awareness

Phoneme awareness is an awareness of and the ability to manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
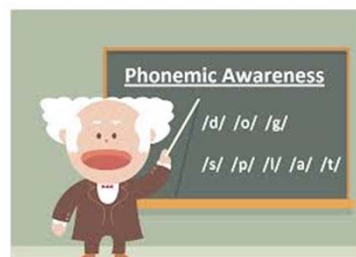
42

Research

- Phonemic awareness constitutes a necessary underlying skill for mapping alphabetic symbols to spoken words and **can be developed through instruction** (Ehri, 2004).

- It is **one of the strongest predictors** of reading success (Blachman, 1989; Adams, 1990).

43

Research (cont.)

- Teaching phoneme awareness **reduces the incidence of reading problems** (Fowler, 2001).
- **Linking phoneme awareness with letter instruction** facilitates transfer to reading and spelling (Ehri, 2004).
- Instructional **approaches that are the most phonemically explicit** have the greatest impact (Torgensen, 2002).

44

What to Do

- Picture sorts
- *Say It and Move It* (Blachman, *Road* the Code)
- Elkonin Boxes
- Teach *articulatory gestures* (i.e., wha your mouth is doing)

45

Phonics and Spelling

Phonics is the study and use of sound/spelling correspondences and syllable patterns to help students read written words.

46

Phonics and Spelling (cont.)

Spelling, also referred to as encoding, is reciprocal to decoding. In order to spell a word, we must first hear the individual sounds, and then write the letter(s) that represent the sounds. When spelling, we go from speech to print. When reading, we go from print to speech.

47

Research

- **Systematic phonics instruction is more effective** than instruction that includes nonsystematic or no phonics instruction

(National Reading Panel, 2000).

- Word recognition skill fosters comprehension (Ehri, 2004).

48

Research (cont.)

- Skill in word recognition and reading comprehension are well correlated, especially in beginning readers (Shankweiler et al., 1999).
- **Teaching the vowel patterns** ensures that about 85% of words can be decoded accurately (May, 1988).

49

What to Do

- Practice the speech to print match (mapping sounds to letters).
- Begin with closed syllables because they are the most transparent and regular.
- Sequentially teach the syllable/vowel patterns *to mastery*.

s	a	d		
th	i	n		
s	l	ee	p	
s	t	r	ea	m
f	l	u	ff	

50

Dyslexia and Spelling

- Individuals with dyslexia can learn to decode words accurately and most can learn to spell phonetically.
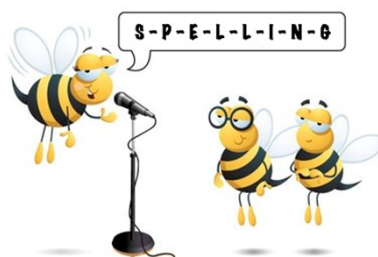
51

Dyslexia and Spelling (cont.)

- Accommodating for spelling difficulty is essential!
  - Grade work on content.
  - Use assistive technology and proofreading assistance.
  - Encourage students to turn in rough drafts so that spelling errors can be checked and corrected spellings can be incorporated into revisions.

52

What It Takes to Be a Fluent Reader

- **Accuracy** – know the syllable types and spelling patterns in order to ***decode*** a word accurately
- **Automaticity** – recognize and apply those patterns in words instantly – i.e., less than one second (aka ***rate***)

53

Fluent Reading (cont.)

- **Prosody (Intonation and Phrasing)** – group the words in grammatical entities – i.e., elaborated noun phrases, prepositional phrases, verb + adverb phrases

A gigantic pine tree in my front yard was covered with snow throughout the winter.

54

Dyslexia and Fluency

What To Do

- Develop accurate reading using decodable text.
- Use repeated reading to develop prosody.
- Understand that oral reading is difficult for most students.

What Not To Do

- Promote memorization of sight words.
- Emphasize speed.
- Use the 3 Cueing System model.
- Drill and kill.

55

Text Comprehension and Written Expression

- Text comprehension, the ability to make meaning, is the ultimate goal of reading. It requires specific skills and strategies, vocabulary, background knowledge and verbal reasoning skills.

- Written expression refers to a highly complex, cognitive, self-directed process. Components of the process include planning, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, evaluating, and publishing.

56

Text Comprehension

- Intervention must occur at the word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and discourse levels
- Develop students' syntactic awareness (i.e., sentence level comprehension skills) to ensure that they are building coherence
- Teach text structures (paragraphs, narrative, and informational) and genres

57

Written Expression: A Complex Process

Writing requires the simultaneous and sequential integration of many subprocesses:

- Lower-level skills
  - Handwriting (gross and fine motor)
  - Spelling

58

Written Expression: A Complex Process (cont.)

- Higher-level (language and higher order cognition)
  - Sentence structure
  - Text structure (narrative vs. expository)
  - Ideation
  - Vocabulary
  - Executive Functions (i.e., attention, organization, working memory, self-monitoring)

59

Handwriting Instruction

Handwriting automaticity at an early age (writing alphabet letters quickly from memory) is a strong predictor of the quality of composition in older, normally developing writers.

If letter production is automatic, then the child is able to attend to higher level composing processes, such as deciding what to write about, what to say, and how to say it.

60

Spear-Swerling, 2006

It's All About the Teacher!!

"One of the most important conclusions from research is that for children with learning problems, learning is hard work. A corollary to this finding is that for their teachers, instruction is very hard work and requires an enormous amount of training and support. Children who have difficulty learning to read or completing mathematics problems will likely not benefit from 'more of the same' but require an **alternative method of teaching** to assist their learning."

Semrud-Clikeman, 2005

61

Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading

The document serves as a guide in reviewing and accrediting programs that prepare teachers of reading and/or programs that specialize in preparing teachers to work with students who have reading difficulties and disabilities.

https://eida.org/knowledge-and-practices/

The International Dyslexia Association

62

Common Elements of Successful Interventions

1. They include multiple instructional components, but always focus on *explicit* and *systematic* instruction in *phonology* and the *alphabetic code*.
2. They are *engaging* and *interactive*, often incorporating manipulatives.
3. They allow students *many opportunities to respond.*

63

Common Elements of Successful Interventions (cont.)

4. Students are provided *many opportunities to practice* through *cumulative reviews* to support *mastery learning*.
5. Data are used to *monitor progress* and ensure *intervention fidelity*.

Al Otaiba, Connor, et al., 2009

64

'Structured Literacy' Interventions

These interventions use an approach that includes several important characteristics:

- Language-based
- Diagnostic and prescriptive
- Systematic
- Explicit and direct
- Sequential and cumulative
- Immediate corrective feedback provided

65

Dyslexia: A Sea of Strengths

Concept Formation

Comprehension

Reasoning

Decoding

General Knowledge

Critical Thinking

Vocabulary

Problem Solving

66
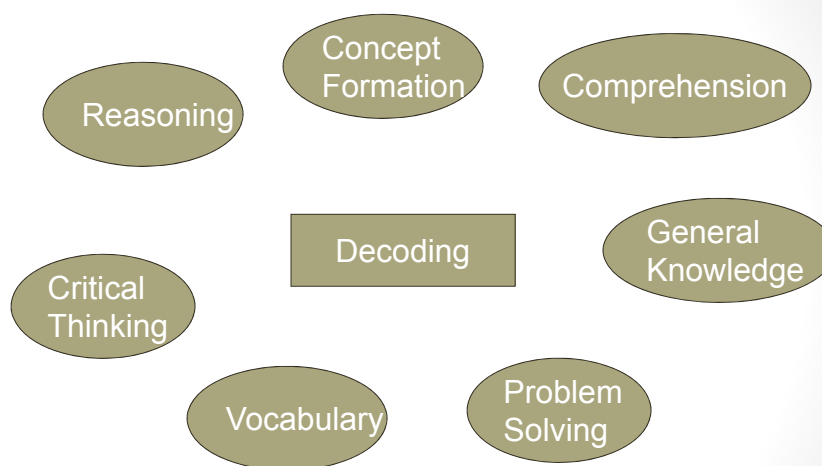
In dyslexia, an encapsulated weakness in decoding is surrounded by many strengths *(Shaywitz, 2003)*.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

67

CONSIDERING THE DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

68

Primary Resources

- *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions* (SRBI) Framework
  - Prevention and Early Intervention

- *Guidelines for Identifying Children with Specific Learning Disabilities* (Reading Disabilities)
  - Definition of Specific Learning Disabilities has included the term Dyslexia (Public Law 94-142, IDEA 1997, IDEA 2004)
  - Reading Worksheet

69

District Review of Scientific Research-Based Intervention Process

SRBI Framework and Process
- Identify current instruction and intervention techniques being used in district
- Identify current progress monitoring measures being used in district
- Ensure core instruction is implemented with fidelity (Partnership between general and special education)
- Determine any changes that may be necessary

70

# District Review of Our Students with SLD

Who are these students?

- Who have we identified as having a code-based reading disability?
- Who are the students for whom we are providing direct and explicit reading interventions?

Who are the staff trained in explicit systematic code-based instruction?

71

Connecting the Dots Through Professional Learning

KNOWLEDGE

APPLICATION

UNDERSTANDING
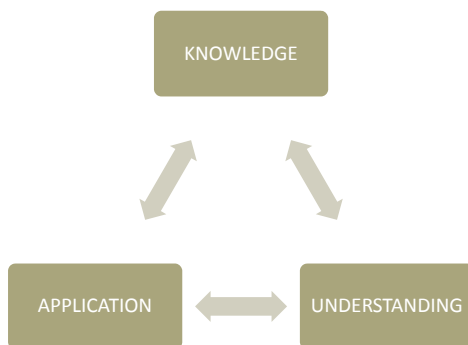
72

Practical Considerations

- Connections to LD Guidelines and Reading Disabilities

- Staff confidence in their knowledge of dyslexia

- Staff capacity to have collaborative and responsive conversations with families at PPT meetings

73

Professional Learning

Evaluation and Identification
- Staff need the right evaluation tools and protocols to determine eligibility
  - Review and refine assessment and evaluation protocols
  - Determine any new assessments you need to conduct a comprehensive evaluation

74

Professional Learning

Programming
- Improve diagnostic approaches in designing interventions (connect assessment and instruction)
- Determine protocols for intervention and progress monitoring (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency)
- Sharpen staff skills in delivering explicit, systematic, code-based interventions and progress monitoring (fidelity)

75

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

76

WRAPPING UP

77

Additional Resources

SERC Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia website

http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=134
4:specific-learning-disabilitiesdyslexia-initiative-related-
links&catid=150:specific-learning-disabilitiesdyslexia-
initiative&Itemid=110

SERC Lib. Guide on SLD/Dyslexia website

http://ctserc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=612445&sid=5061
131

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia*

- Dyslexia is included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) as a specific learning disability (SLD). Dyslexia impacts reading, specifically decoding and accurate and/or fluent word recognition and spelling. Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and is unexpected and/or inconsistent with a student's other abilities often despite the provision of appropriate instruction. Dyslexia results from a <u>significant deficit</u> in phonological processing (i.e., a persistent difficulty in the awareness of and ability to manipulate the individual sounds of spoken language).
- Typically, students with dyslexia have strengths and cognitive abilities in areas such as reasoning, critical thinking, concept formation, problem solving, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and social communication (e.g., conversation). Early identification and appropriate instruction targeting the underlying phonological processing deficits that characterize dyslexia may minimize its educational impact.

79

CSDE Working Definition of Dyslexia* (cont.)

Essential Clarifications

- Dyslexia is not *primarily* the result of visual, hearing, or motor disability; an intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; a lack of appropriate instruction; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency.
- Early identification of the characteristics of dyslexia is critical, leading to focused, evidence-based interventions, accommodations, self-awareness, self-empowerment, and school and life success.
- Without targeted, systematic and explicit instruction/interventions along with accommodations (e.g., accessible educational materials in content area subjects), students with dyslexia may have:
  - reduced reading experiences that may impact the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge,
  - difficulty with written expression, and/or
  - difficulty learning a second language.
- Students with dyslexia may demonstrate additional behavioral and/or emotional reactions to their difficulty with learning to read.

80

*This working definition was developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) with input from an external stakeholder workgroup and is based on a review of applicable literature, the IDEA, and current definitions in use by other states, organizations and legislation.

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Workgroup Member	Title/Role	Stakeholder Group
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Michelle Baker	Waterbury – Principal/Elementary	Administrator/Reg Ed
Don Briere	BSE Consultant – Literacy/SRBI/SPDG	CSDE
Marie Broadway	Meriden – (MS/SpEd)	AFT
Linda Carabis	RSD #10 – Director/Student Support Services	CAS
Christine Carver	Bethel – Superintendent	CAPSS
Sarah Galatie	Cromwell – Reading Specialist/MS - HS	CEA
Margie Gillis	Haskins Laboratories/Learning How	Reading Researcher
Bridgette Gordon-Hickey	LEARN – Director Student Support Services	RESC Alliance
Joan Hofmann	CSPD/University of St. Joseph/Special Ed	CSPD
Gail Mangs	BSE Consultant – Due Process Attorney	CSDE
Maureen Masson	SAC – School Psychologist, Stonington/Parent	State Advisory Council (SAC)
Jule McCombes-Tolis	University of St. Joseph/SpEd, Rdg, CEEDAR	Higher Education
Donna Merritt	Facilitator – Consultant – SLD/SLP	SERC

82

2014-2015 SLD/Dyslexia Workgroup Members

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Cathy Osten	State Senator	CT General Assembly
Nancy Prescott	Executive Director	CPAC
Stephen Proffitt	Logistics Coordinator – Consultant – CSPD/SpEd	SERC
Allison Quirion	Parent/Decoding Dyslexia	Decoding Dyslexia
Laura Raynolds	SCSU – Reading/EL/Haskins Laboratories	English Learners
Michael Regan	CES – SpEd Director /School Psychology	ConnCASE
Sally Shaywitz	Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity	Dyslexia Researcher/MD
Mary Jean Schierberl	BSE Consultant – Due Process Attorney	CSDE
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Maria Synodi	BSE Consultant – Early Childhood Special Ed	CSDE
Jennifer Webb	Academic Office Consultant/English - LA/SRBI	CSDE
Joanne White	Academic Office Consultant/English – Language Arts/K-3 Literacy	CSDE

83

Participant Evaluation

Please take a few moments to complete an evaluation of this webinar in Survey Monkey.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GGJ9MVM

Thank you for your participation and feedback!