

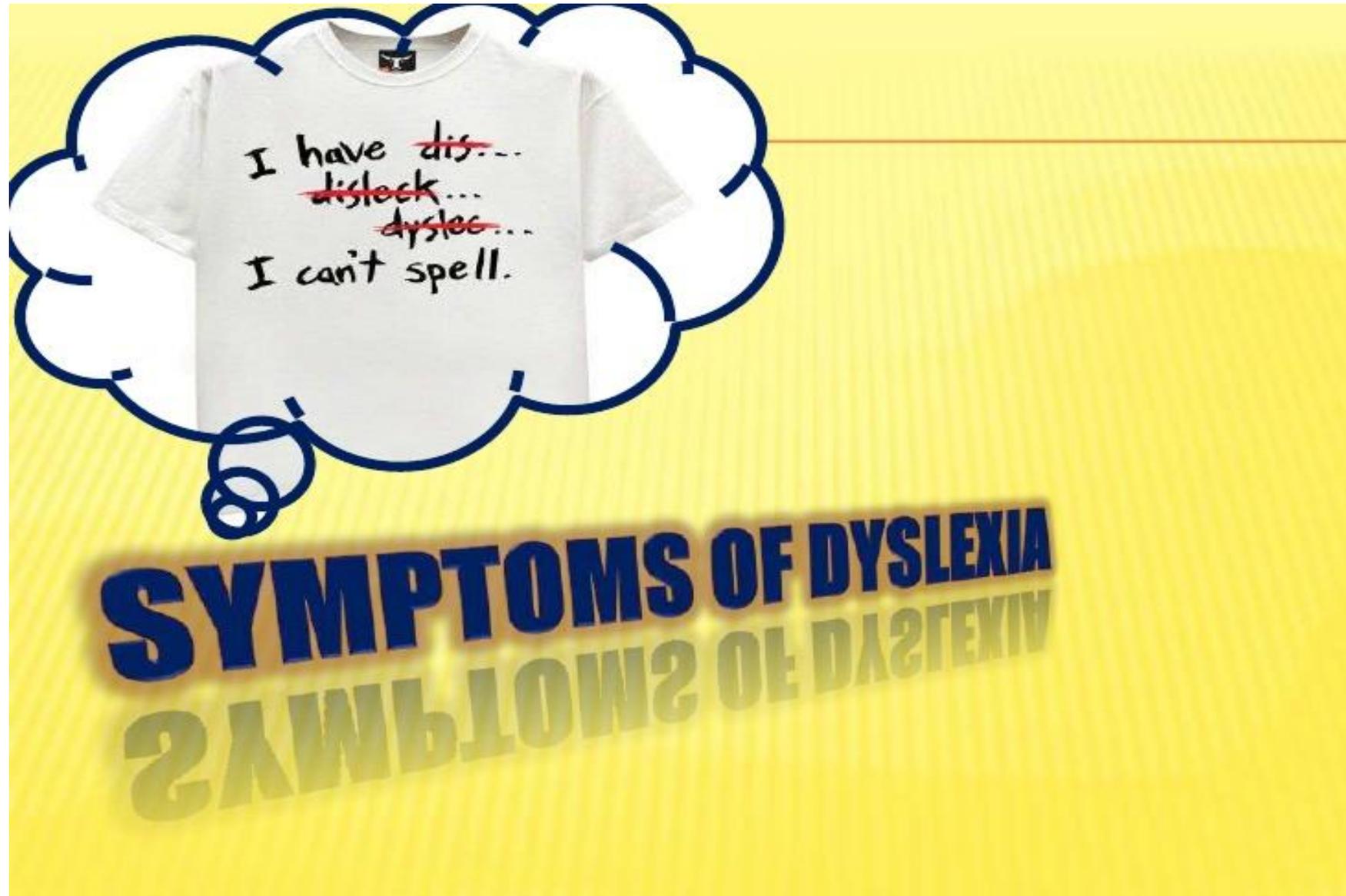
Symptoms of and diagnosis of dyslexia in adolescents

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In Turkey most of the authorities including Ministry of Education mainly use the term “Specific Learning Difficulties” rather than “dyslexia”.

Facing with the problem

- Many children try to cope with academic and social demands of school life in spite of their possible but undiagnosed dyslexia.
- They and their parents are unaware of the fact that they may have a learning difficulty.
- Though they somehow may improve the required literacy skills at some point during their school life; most of them spend the long years of compulsory education believing that there is “something wrong “with them.



Playing an active role in identification

- The specific signs of dyslexia will vary according to the age and educational level of the individual.
- The 5 year old who can't learn his letters becomes the 6 year old who can't match sounds to letters and 14 year old who dreads reading aloud and the 24 year old who reads agonizingly slowly.
- The problems persist throughout a person's life.
- The key point is knowing how to recognize the signs at different developmental stages.

Reading Problems

- Word reading becomes more accurate over time but continues to require great effort.
- Initially had trouble or still has trouble with sight words (e.g. was, what, is, the)
- Difficulty catching on to phonics or sounding out words
- Lacks awareness of the sounds in words, rhymes or sequences of syllables (e.g. what is the last sound in the word “action”, “fun”)
- Tends to confuse words that look alike (e.g. was/saw, for/from, who/how, house/home)
- Tend to lose his place when reading (tracking problem)

Reading Problems

- Stumbling on multisyllable words, or failure to come close to sounding out the full word
- Omitting parts of words when reading; the failure to decode parts within a word such as conible for convertible
- Mis-reads or omits small words(for, of, with, an, it) and word endings (-ing, -ed, -ly,-s)
- Confuses words with similar spelling (slat/salt, slime/smile)
- The substitution of made up words during reading for words that cannot be pronounced- e.g. metropolitan becomes mitan- cannot recognize the word when it is seen again or heard in a lecture next day.
- The substitution of words with the same meaning for words in the text he can't pronounce, such as "car" for "automobile."

Reading Problems

- Reads and rereads with little comprehension
- Poor comprehension leads to difficulty in catching what the author does not say, but hints at.
- Cannot read between the lines well
- A reliance on pictures or context to discern the meaning of what is read
- A better ability to understand words in context than to read isolated single words

Reading Problems

- A fear of reading out loud; the avoidance of oral reading
- Oral reading filled with substitutions, omissions, and mispronunciations
- Oral reading that is choppy and labored, not smooth or fluent
- Oral reading that lacks inflection and sounds like the reading of a foreign language

Reading Problems

- A lack of enjoyment in reading, and the avoidance of reading books or even a sentence
- The avoidance of reading for pleasure, which seems too exhausting
- A preference for books with fewer words per page or with lots of white showing on a page

Written assignments

- Homework that never seems to end, or with parents often recruited as readers
- Messy handwriting
- Spelling the same word differently in the same essay
- Frequent sacrifice of social life for studying
- Particularly poor performance on rote clerical tasks

Learning, memory and attention

- Disproportionately poor performance on multiple choice tests
- The inability to finish tests on time
- Trouble reading mathematics word problems
- Extreme difficulty learning a foreign language
- Test well orally but not in written tests
- Difficulty maintaining attention; loses track of time, seems “hyper”
- Poor short term or working memory
- Poor memory of sequences, facts and information that has not been experienced.

- Excellent memory for experiences

Understanding dyslexia

- These clues across the lifespan offer a portrait of dyslexia.
- If you think your students have some of these problems, it is important to note how frequent and how many they are.
- To be concerned, the symptoms must be persistent. Anyone can mispronounce a word now and then, or confuse similar sounding words occasionally. You should look for persistent pattern and the occurrence of a number of these symptoms over a long period of time.
- This first intervention most probably leads to identification and hopefully remediation of the problems.

Diagnosis of dyslexia

Each diagnostic institution have different tools but usually intelligence tests are used. Other tools are reading and writing tests, phonological awareness tests, memory, learning, attention tests, Bender, interview forms etc.

The support Education Program for Specific Learning Difficulties has 3 modules

• Name of the Module	Duration
• Preparation for learning	300 Class hours
• Reading and writing	250 Class hours
• Mathematics	200 Class hours

Official diagnosis in Turkey

In Turkey, dyslexia is categorized as disability but it is not mentioned in general disability legislation and there are no available data in national statistics (TUIK, 2010, Survey on Problems and Expectations of Disabled People) Therefore it is very much difficult to obtain information about the prevalence or demographic characteristics of dyslexia and dyslexic individuals. It seems that there are not any dyslexic people having problems outside or other than school environment. Because dyslexia is not recognized under the disability act, dyslexic individuals can not benefit from incentives that the other disability groups can regularly have as their social rights.

Contrary to the general legislation, if dyslexic students would like to have support education funded by Ministry of National Education, they should have diagnosed as disabled and receive a committee report that mention their disability rate is %20 or above. Most of the parents refuse to accept the label of disabled and give up the opportunity to have support education for their children. Refraining from stigmatization is more frequent in adolescents and young adults than primary school children.

In Turkey official diagnosis of dyslexia or specific learning difficulties can only be realized by child and adolescents psychiatrists. The other professionals; guidance and research centers, private consultancy centers, school counselors, psychologists, special education experts can only work with students, refer them to related authorities, prepare their individualized educational plans etc. but cannot put the label on any students.

After official diagnose either by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or a health committee, pre-school, primary, secondary and high school students can be included or mainstreamed in their own classroom with the official procedures run by guidance and research centers in cooperation with school management and parent. This is the first step for dyslexic students to obtain their other rights such as individualized educational plans, extra time, if necessary a reader for central examinations etc.

After a comprehensive assessment of all development areas and evaluation of the academic skills, educational identification is realized and objectives of one year plan is prepared. All the data concerning identification, inclusion and support education plans for each individuals uploaded to the system for future references and monitoring the expected improvements.

This 750 class hour support program can be given twice for each student if necessary provided that the required procedures completed on yearly basis.

