

## Risk factors

- **A family history of reading/spelling difficulty**  
A parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or older sibling has reading problems. Approximately 40% of children with such a family history experience problems in school. Only 5% without such a history do.
- **A history of chronic ear infections (otitis media) in the first three years.**  
Intermittent hearing impairment due to frequent ear infection can reduce ability to discriminate individual sounds in words.

## Preschool warning signs

- **Delayed development of oral language**  
Begins talking late. Lacks clear speech or full sentences by age 3. Mispronunciation of common words persists at age 4 or 5.
- **Limited vocabulary or problems finding the right word**  
At age 5, lacks mastery of such items as color names. Often used vague substitute terms such as “thing” or “stuff” for simple or familiar nouns

## Primary grade warning signs

- **Trouble holding verbal information in short term memory**  
Difficulty remembering and immediately repeating a full sentence. Difficulty remembering enough to retell a story just read aloud.
- **Unaware of, or can't manipulate, individual sounds in words**  
Can't detect rhyming words; can't create rhyming pairs; can't tell if the first sound is the same or different in word pairs.
- **Delays in learning letter names and sounds**  
Difficulty memorizing letter names in kindergarten. Can't recite alphabet without singing it in the first grade. In second grade, can't name the letter that makes the first sound in a word. Can't remember or distinguish the difference between the sound of short “i” and short “e”.
- **Problems writing certain letters persistent into 3rd grade**  
Confuses b/d; reverses “s”, “n” or “3”.



## DO YOU KNOW A CHILD WITH UNDIAGNOSED DYSLEXIA?

### Late elementary grade warning signs

- **Poor at sounding out (decoding) individual words which have not been memorized; substitutes a similar word for a larger word**
- **Reading aloud is slow, labored and includes many incorrect pronunciation**
- **Even if text is read correctly, comprehension and retention of author's intended meaning is poor or nonexistent**
- **Persistent spelling problems**
- **Frequent errors in capitalization, punctuation and usage when writing**
- **Seeks to avoid reading, spelling and/or writing activities**