

Dyslexia

Currently, the WISD Dyslexia Program is an Orton-Gillingham based approach. The program is available for any student that exhibits reading difficulty, has not responded to intensive reading instruction, and through evaluation, meets state and district criteria for a student who exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia.

In determining eligibility for the WISD Dyslexia Program students are assessed in the following areas:

- Reading real and nonsense words in isolation (decoding);
- Phonological awareness;
- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound);
- Rapid naming;
- Reading fluency (rate and accuracy);
- Reading comprehension; and
- Written spelling.

The therapy programs used in the WISD dyslexia classes teach the following components of reading:

- Phonemic awareness which that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language;
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) that takes advantage of the letter/sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds and sounds are written with letters in the right order. Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing;
- Language structure that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language conveys meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context);
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with the patterns of language so that words and sentences are the carriers of meaning;
- Strategy-oriented instruction in the strategies students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers.

The instructional approach is explicit, direct instruction that is systematic (structured), sequential, and cumulative. Instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical sequential plan, fits the nature of language (alphabetic principle) with no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge, and maximizes student engagement. This instruction proceeds at a rate commensurate with students' needs, ability levels, and demonstration of progress;