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5 Common Dyslexia Myths



It is estimated that up to 20% of people show symptoms of dyslexia. Successful people like Steven Spielberg, Richard Branson, Whoopi Goldberg, and Charles Schwab have all been diagnosed with this language-based learning disability. Dyslexia often leads to difficulties in reading, spelling, and writing—but its effects can be lessened with early identification.

Although dyslexia is common, it is also misunderstood. Here are five common myths about dyslexia to share with friends and family.

MYTH

Dyslexia is visual, so children and adults see and write letters backwards, such as mixing up “b” and “d”.

Many children reverse letters when learning to write, regardless of whether or not they have dyslexia. Dyslexia manifests itself in different ways and at different times for every child.

FACT

MYTH

There are no clues that a child may have dyslexia before they enter school.

Children with dyslexia can exhibit early clues such as having trouble learning common nursery rhymes or problems learning to recognize letters in their own name.

FACT

MYTH

Dyslexia affects boys more than girls.

Boys with dyslexia are more frequently identified, but dyslexia affects both genders almost equally. This myth may seem real perhaps because girls may tend to quietly go through challenges while boys may be more likely to act out, leading to more boys being diagnosed.

FACT

MYTH

If you have dyslexia, you can't be smart.

Dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence. It occurs in children of all backgrounds and intelligence levels—learners can be both gifted and dyslexic. In fact, Dr. Carol Greider, who won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 2009, has dyslexia and struggled in elementary school.

FACT

MYTH

People with dyslexia are lazy and need to work harder.

Dyslexia is a neurological disorder, meaning the dyslexic brain functions differently which has nothing to do with effort. In fact, many children with dyslexia have to try harder than their peers. Children and adults with dyslexia often find alternative ways of gathering knowledge, and develop their own strategies to learn, work, and achieve in life.

FACT

Identifying dyslexia is often a multi-step process. Research has shown that the sooner a child is screened, diagnosed, and given support, the more likely he or she will enjoy school and be successful, both academically and in life. Research continues to support the need for early screening for dyslexia.

Source: *International Dyslexia Association*®, IDA, 2017.

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