

Pan Berkshire CHSWG

Deafness and Dyslexia

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A large, blue, irregular thought bubble with a smaller bubble trailing off to the bottom left. Inside the main bubble, the text 'Is there a deaf dyslexic profile?' is written in white, sans-serif font.

Is there a deaf
dyslexic
profile?

“Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills. It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects. It is characterised by difficulties with:

- phonological processing
- rapid naming
- working memory
- processing speed

Skills usually don't match up to an individual's other cognitive abilities.



Misconceptions

Dyslexia just affects reading and writing.

Each person is unique in the way they experience the condition

Signs of Dyslexia - Early Years

- Mispronounces words, like saying “beddy tear” instead of “teddy bear” or ‘cubumber or ‘flutterby’

- Struggles to name familiar objects or names of people and uses general words like ‘thing’ and ‘stuff’ instead

- Has difficulty learning nursery rhymes or song lyrics that rhyme

- Has trouble remembering sequences, like singing the letters of the alphabet

- Tells stories that are hard to follow; has trouble talking about an event in a logical order

- Has difficulty remembering and following two or more directions with multiple steps

Difficulty in dressing eg shoe laces and buttons

Poor auditory discrimination

Signs of Dyslexia - Primary

- Has trouble learning letter names and remembering the sounds they make

- Often confuses letters that look similar (b, d, p, q) and letters with similar sounds (d/t; b/p; f/v), also numbers 6 instead of 9

- Struggles to read familiar words (like cat or the), especially if there aren't pictures

Spelling that's unpredictable and inconsistent

- Substitutes words when reading aloud, like saying house when the story says home

Speed of reading, writing is very slow

Poor handwriting

- Has trouble hearing the individual sounds in words and blending sounds to make a word

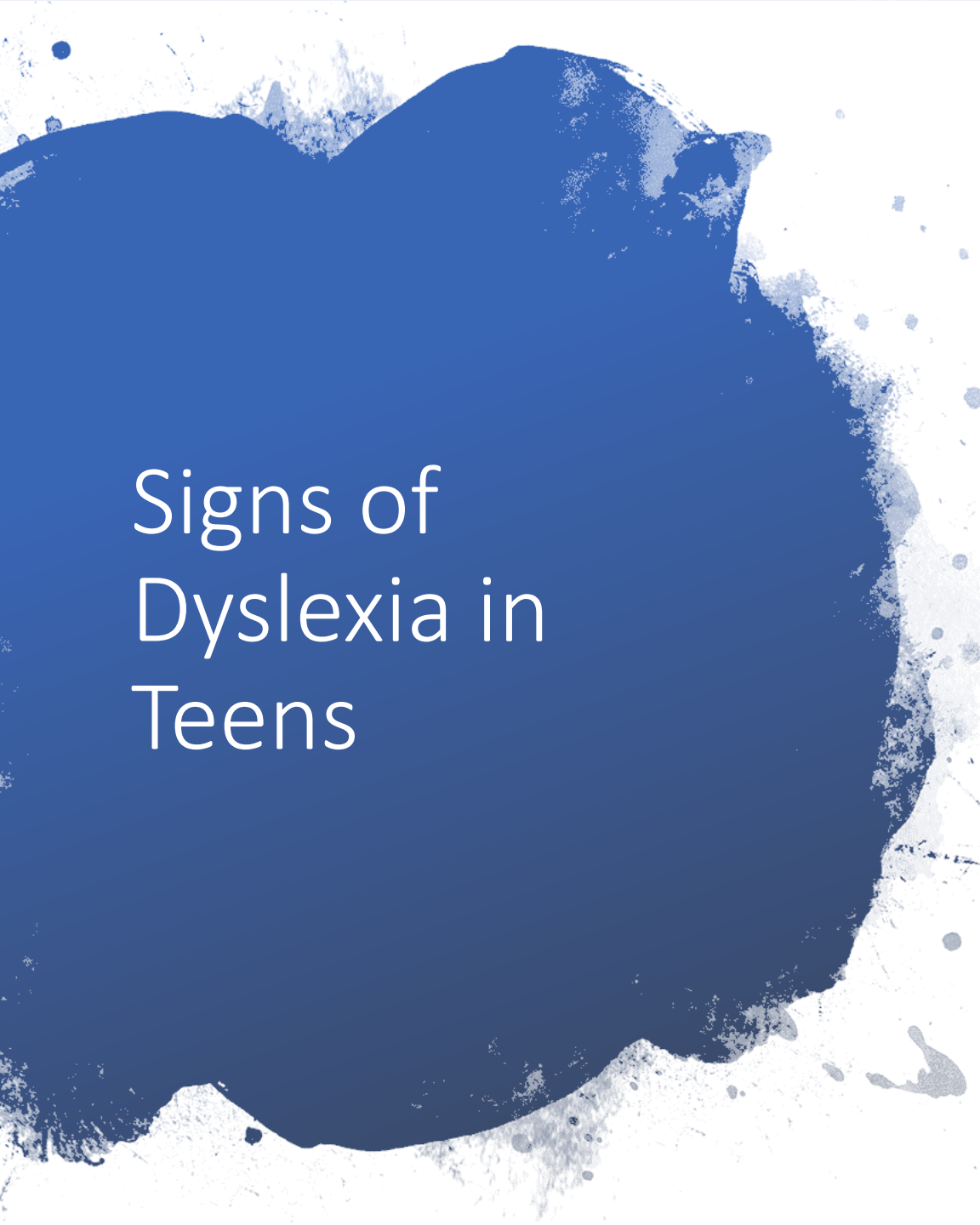
- Has trouble remembering how words are spelled and applying spelling rules in writing

- Confuses or skips small words like for and of when reading aloud

Struggles to learn sequences such as days of the week, months of the year

- Has trouble sounding out new words and quickly recognizing common ones
- Struggles to explain what happened in a story or answer questions about key details
- Avoids reading whenever possible or gets frustrated or upset when reading
- Poor standard of written work compared with oral ability

Lack of expression in reading and poor comprehension



Signs of Dyslexia in Teens

- Reads slowly, leaving out small words and parts of longer words when reading aloud
- Struggles to remember common abbreviations, including ones on social media
- Often seems to be searching for words; may use substitutes like gate instead of fence
- Often doesn't "get" the joke; has trouble understanding idioms and puns
- Has an easier time answering questions about a page of text if it's read aloud
- Takes a very long time to complete reading assignments
- Difficulty with taking notes in lesson



- Attainment data highlights the significant gap between hearing and deaf CYP in terms of reading and writing.
- Research tells us deaf CYP have difficulties with phonological awareness
- How do we differentiate deaf CYP who are poor readers due to limited exposure to pre reading experiences from those who are dyslexic
- No tests available and no normative data for CYP who are deaf



Research

Herman, Roy & Kyle, 2014 and 2017

Reading and dyslexia in deaf children

2 phase study 10-11yr olds (all severe or profoundly deaf)

Questions

- *What measures can be used to identify dyslexia in deaf children? Does this differ between communication preferences*
- *Are deaf children's reading difficulties similar to the typical dyslexic profile, or do some deaf children display uniquely dyslexic profiles?*
- *What are the key factors associated with good and poor reading in this group?*
- *What are the implications for interventions with poor deaf readers?*

Tests (those used with hearing CYP plus additional targeted areas relating to reading and deafness)

- Nonverbal skills
- Literacy skills (letter-sound knowledge, single word & non-word reading, reading comprehension, spelling)
- Phonological skills
- Naming speed (pictures and digits)
- Fluency (semantic and rhyme) skills
- Language skills (expressive vocabulary; BSL skills)
- **Speech intelligibility**
- **Speechreading skills**
- Sequential organisation skills

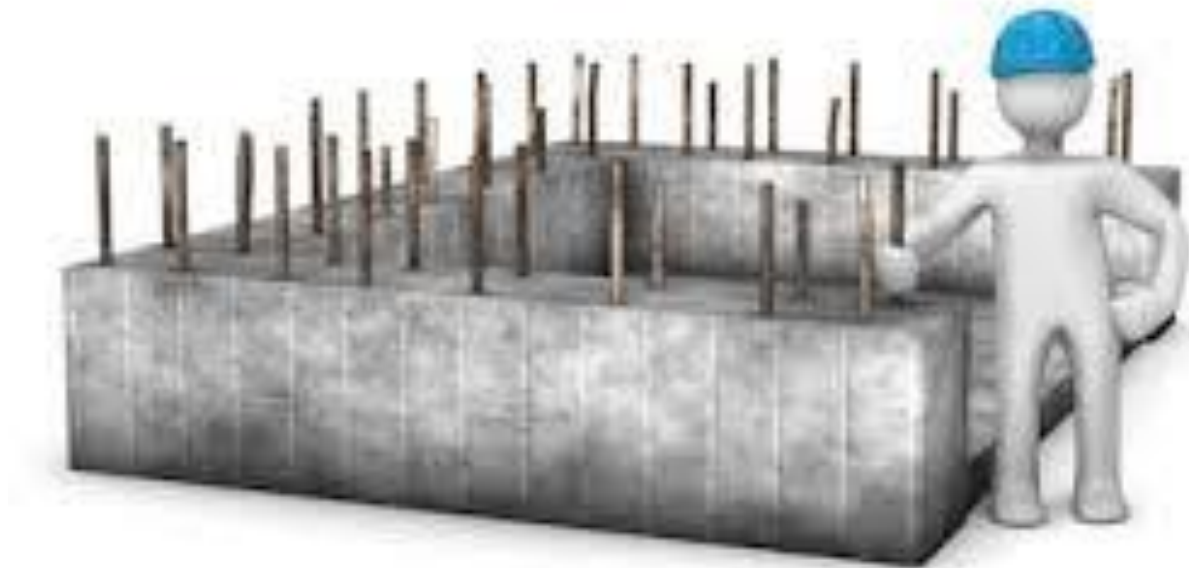
Findings

- Overall literacy scores were below age related expectations (ARE)
- 48% of the oral group below ARE
- 82% of the signing group below ARE
- Small group of signing YP whose parents were both deaf who achieved the same level as the oral cohort
- Spelling was better than reading for both groups
- No deaf poor reader fit the classic dyslexic profile of weak phonological skills and average language
- Key role of vocabulary in deaf children's literacy skills (and Language)

Practical Suggestions

- Following diagnosis –do we ask if there is a history of dyslexia in the family.
- More emphasis on nursery rhymes – encourage rhythm and rhyme
- Lots of auditory memory games
- Developing kinaesthetic awareness –tracking shapes and letter ,words, pictures with eyes closed
- Playing games like what's in the bag
- Reading lots of books and using the language of books – pictures, words, letters, front of the book, cover, top of the page

Implications



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- Greater focus on vocabulary building
- Speech discrimination skills
- Development of phonological awareness – beyond phonics!
- Auditory memory and sequencing