

Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a learning disability that is most associated with writing. However, dysgraphia is more than just having poor handwriting; it is an issue with a set of skills known as transcription. These skills include handwriting, typing, and spelling.

Students with dysgraphia may find it difficult to coordinate the motor skills necessary to write thoughts on paper, organize letters correctly for spelling, and develop the thinking skills needed for vocabulary retrieval. As a result, students with dysgraphia may have difficulties with planning spatially on paper, may have illegible or poor handwriting, and may leave inconsistent or no space between words. Although trouble with written expression isn't a characteristic of dysgraphia, having to focus so hard on forming letters can cause students to struggle with expressing themselves.

TYPES OF DYSGRAPHIA

- **Language-based dysgraphia:** defined by a disconnect between the thought process for writing and the physical process; a student can think of a complete sentence but is unable to convert it into correctly-written words; they may omit punctuation or have words in the wrong order
- **Non-language based dysgraphia:** occurs when there are physical problems with the writing process; for example, fine motor coordination and/or muscle memory needed to form letters is extremely lacking.

COMMON ISSUES WITH DYSGRAPHIA

- **Handwriting:** Students may have difficulties with printing or cursive writing and mix print with cursive, uppercase and lowercase letters, and have unusual formation of letters.
- **Spacing:** Letters are not spaced correctly on the page and are not written in a straight line.
- **Fine motor skills:** Students may struggle with proper grip, use of proper muscles in the wrist for writing, and experience feelings of frustration when completing tasks such as copying notes or written expression.

- **Written Expression:** Students may struggle to get their thoughts down on paper and omit words, write less than they can express orally, or avoid writing tasks altogether.
- **Tiredness:** Students with dysgraphia have to work exceptionally hard to form their letters and coordinate body parts correctly and as a result, writing and maintaining the correct body position can be very tiring for them.

HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH DYSGRAPHIA

- ✓ Teaching proper posture, grip, and letter formation by incorporating engaging multisensory elements into 1-to-1 lessons and group classes such as Power Pencils
- ✓ Using 1-to-1 Direct Instruction to teach students to plan and organize written expression using systematic, numbered writing systems such as Power Sentences, Power Paragraphs, or Power Essays
- ✓ Keyboarding instruction to teach students correct typing skills to allow for task completion of written tasks on the computer instead of using handwriting
- ✓ Using assistive technology for dictation and typing features and remove the physical challenges associated with writing

“The scribbles and swirls were the consonants that all sounded alike, the loops were the vowels that flattened into an indistinct “uh.” The lines on the page were like unraveling spools of barbed wire, blocking us from our daughter’s words.”

- Father of Anna (age 7) who has various LD’s and dysgraphia



ruth rumack's
LEARNING SPACE