

# Addressing the Needs of Students with Language- Based Learning Disabilities

Presentation to  
Ipswich SEPAC  
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# Dyslexia vs. SLD

- Dyslexia = medical term
- Diagnosis made by medical or clinical professional
- Based on medical or clinical evaluation
- SLD= educational term; may/may not be based on clinical Dx
- Eligibility determination; not Dx
- Evaluation + observations + other educational evidence
- No single determinant; must include multiple sources of information

# Specially Designed Instruction

- Specially Designed Instruction = Instruction to meet the unique needs of the student
- May include : modifying content, methodology, delivery of instruction, or instructional format, or performance criteria
- No “one size fits all” formula—individually - designed

# Requirements for SLD Eligibility

- Test scores cannot be a single determinant
- Federal requirements require comparison to age and ability
- Must rule out environmental, cultural, economic contributors
- Team must document basis for determination, relevant behavior from observations, relationship of behavior to academic functioning (ctd.)

## Eligibility (Ctd.)

- Disability must be meshed with inability to make effective progress
- Lack of instruction must be considered by the Team when the Team has knowledge that the student has received limited instructional variation . Ex. Reading instruction that employed solely a whole language approach

# Supports

- A continuum of supports is provided for a spectrum of needs
- Least restrictive environment; least stigmatizing supports
- Partnership of school and home, tailored to maintain self esteem, engagement, and build upon strengths
- Accommodations and use of technology
- Structured phonics instruction (Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, Foundations, LIPS)

# Accommodations

- Extended time for processing
- Use of electronic organizers
- Recorded books and text- to- speech aid in developing fluency, spotting errors, greater engagement, and increased comprehension
- Studying strategically and Executive Functioning supports also aid success

# Role of Self Esteem and Insight

- School and family should help the student to understand s/he is not stupid or lazy
- Student should come to understand the disability as a “difference,” not an obstacle
- Celebrate other areas of strength while continuing to work on challenges
- Some studies suggest that individuals with dyslexia may have visual strengths, even though they have difficulty focusing visual attention (those who had difficulty focusing visual attention in preschool had more difficulty learning to read)
- Dyslexic students may see things more holistically, which results in appreciating the Big Picture and thinking “outside the box.”



# Structured Phonics Reading Strategies

- Rule-based strategies increase reading efficiency
- Orton-Gillingham
- Wilson
- Lindamood Bell (LIPS)
- Structured programs for written expression
- Language-based environments which scaffold and make learning accessible without “lowering the bar”

# Ipswich Trainings

- Language-based learning strategies training for general and special education teachers from Landmark
- Training in co-teaching
- Orton-Gillingham training
- Wilson training
- Lindamood Bell training

# Resources

- *Is Special Education the Right Service*  
DESE technical assistance guide
- Redford, Kyle. *Kids Can't Wait: Strategies to Support Struggling Readers Which Don't Require a Ph.D. in Neuropsychology*. [Dyslexia.yale.edu](http://Dyslexia.yale.edu) website
- Schneps, Matthew, *The Advantages of Dyslexia*, [Scientific American](#), 8/19/14.